

Moore's Edition.

L E T T E R S

FROM A

PERSIAN IN ENGLAND,

TO HIS

FRIEND AT ISPAHAN,

BY GEORGE LORD LYTTLETON.

NON ITA CERTANDI CUPIDUS, QUAM PROPTER AMOREM
QUOD TE IMITARI AVEO—

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J. T. F. R. S.



FRIEND AT LONDON

MR. GEORGE LORD LITTON

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1863

TO THE BOOKSELLER.

SIR,

I Need not acquaint you by what accident these Letters were put into my hands, and what pains I have taken in translating them; I will only say that, having been long a scholar to the late most learned Mr. Dadichy, interpreter of the Oriental languages, I have acquired skill enough in the Persian tongue to be able to give the sense of them pretty justly; though I must acknowledge my translation far inferior to the Eastern sublimity of the original, which no English expression can come up to, and which no English reader would admire.

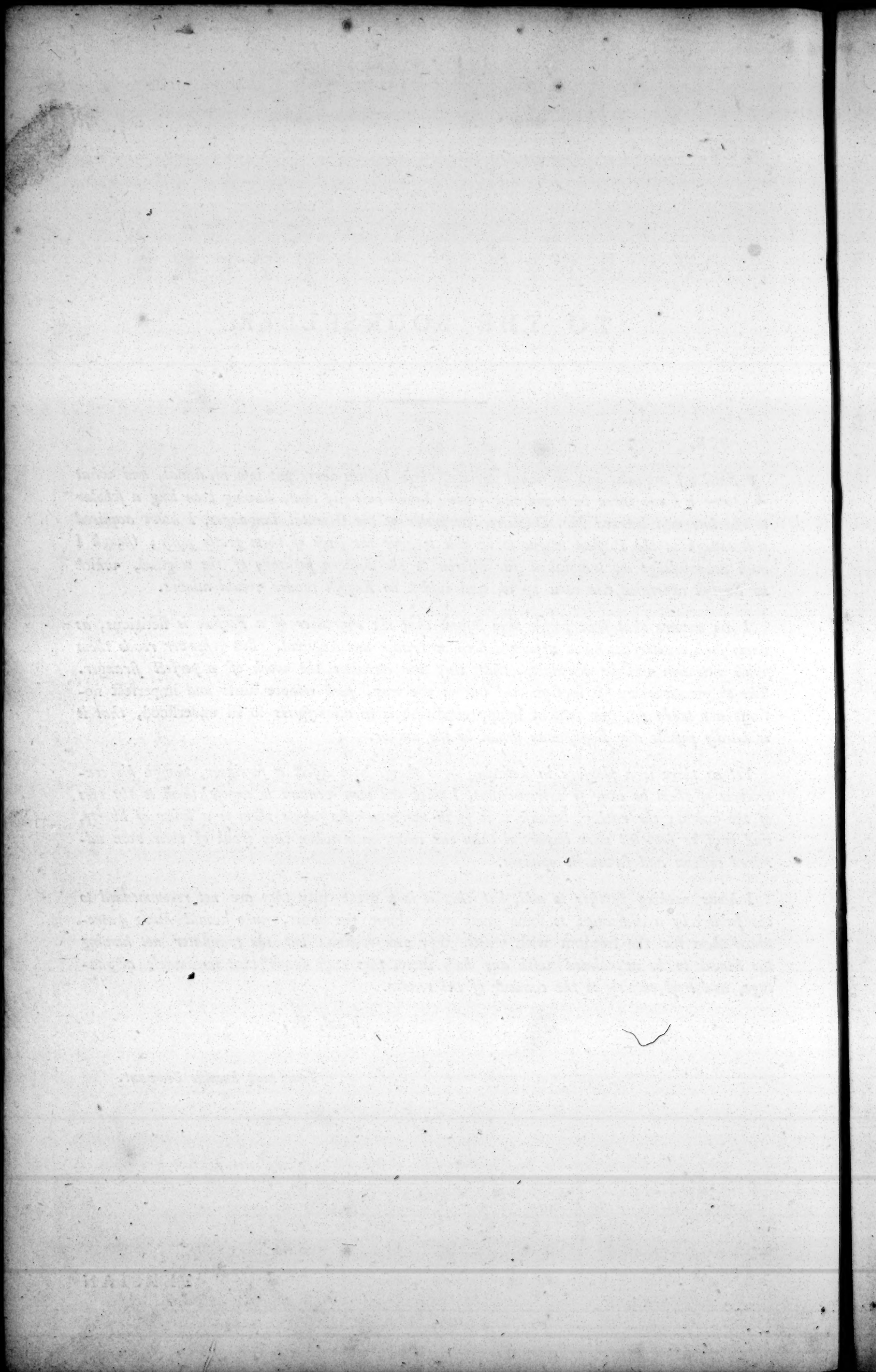
I am aware that some people may suspect that the character of a Persian is fictitious, as many such counterfeits have appeared both in France and England. But whoever reads them with attention will be convinced, that they are certainly the work of a perfect stranger. The observations are so foreign and out of the way, such remote hints and imperfect notions are taken up, our present happy condition is in all respects so ill understood, that it is hardly possible any Englishman should be the author.

Yet as there is a pleasure in knowing how things here affect a foreigner, though his conceptions of them be ever so extravagant, I think you may venture to expose them to the eyes of the world; the rather, because it is plain the man who wrote them is a lover of liberty, and must be supposed more impartial than our countrymen when they speak of their own admired customs and favourite opinions.

I have nothing further to add, but that it is a great pity they are not recommended to the publick by a dedication to some great man about the court, who would have patronized them for the freedom with which they are written: but the translator not having the honour to be acquainted with any body there, they must want that inestimable advantage, and trust entirely to the candour of the reader.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble Servant.



P E R S I A N L E T T E R S.

L E T T E R I.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

THOU knowest, my dearest Mirza, the reasons that moved me to leave my country, and visit England; thou wast thyself, in a great measure, the cause of it. The relations we received from our friend Usbec, of those parts of Europe which he had seen, raised in us an ardent desire to know the rest, and particularly *this famous island*, of which, not having been there himself, he could give us but imperfect accounts.

By his persuasion we determined to travel *thither*; but when we were just ready to set out, the sublime orders of the Sophi our master detained thee at the feet of his sacred throne.

Unwilling as I was to go alone, I yielded to thy importunities, and was content to live single among strangers and enemies to the faith, that I might be able to gratify the thirst of knowledge.

My voyage was prosperous; and I find this country well worthy our curiosity. The recommendations given me by Usbec to some English he knew at Paris, are a great advantage to me; and I have taken such pains to

learn the language that I am already more capable of conversation than a great many foreigners I meet with here, who have resided much longer in this country, especially the French, who seem to value themselves upon speaking no tongue but their own.

I shall apply myself principally to study *the English government*, so different from that of Persia, and of which Usbec has conceived at a distance so great an idea.

Whatever in the manners of this people appears to me to be *singular* and *fantastical*, I will also give thee some account of; and, if I may judge by what I have seen already, this is a subject which will not easily be exhausted.

Communicate my letters to Usbec, and he will explain such difficulties to thee as may happen to occur; but if any thing should seem to you both to be *unaccountable*, do not therefore immediately conclude it *false*; for the *habits* and *reasonings* of men are so very different, that what appears the excess of *folly* in one country, may in another be esteemed the highest *wisdom*.

L E T T E R II.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London,

THE first object of a stranger's curiosity are the public spectacles. I was carried last night to one they call an opera; which is a concert of music brought from

Italy, and in every respect *foreign* to this country. It was performed in a chamber as magnificent as the resplendent palace of our emperor, and as full of handsome women as

His seraglio: they had no eunuchs among them, but there was one who sung upon the stage, and by the luxurious tenderness of his airs seemed fitter to make them wanton than keep them chaste.

Instead of the habit proper to such creatures, he wore a suit of armour, and called himself Julius Cæsar.

I asked who Julius Cæsar was, and whether he had been famous for *singing*.

They told me, he was a warrior that had conquered all the world, and debauched half the women in Rome.

I was going to express my admiration at seeing him so properly represented, when I heard two ladies who sat nigh me, cry out as it were in an extasy—‘O that dear creature! *I am dying for love of him.*’

At the same time I heard a gentleman say aloud, that both the musick and singers were detestable.

‘You must not mind him,’ said my friend, ‘he is of the *other party*, and comes here only as a *spy*.’

‘How,’ said I, ‘have you parties in musick?’—‘Yes,’ replied he; ‘it is a rule with us to judge of nothing by our senses and understanding, but to hear, and see, and think, only as we chance to be differently engaged.’

‘I hope,’ said I, ‘that a stranger may be neutral in these divisions; and, to say the truth, your musick is very far from inflaming me to a spirit of faction; it is much more likely to lay me asleep. Ours in Persia sets us a dancing; but I am quite unmoved with this.’

‘Do but *fancy it moving*,’ returned my friend, ‘and you will soon be *moved* as much as others: it is a trick you may learn when you will, with a little pains; we have most of us learnt it in our turns’.

LETTER III.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

I WAS this morning present at a diversion extremely different from the opera, of which I have given thee a description, and they tell me it is peculiar to this country. The spectators were placed in galleries of an open circus; below them was an area filled, not with eunuchs and musicians, but with bulls and bears, and dogs and fighting-men. The pleasure was to see the animals worry and gore one another, and the men give and receive many wounds, which the delighted beholders rewarded with flowers or money, greater or less in proportion as the combatants were more or less hurt. I had some compassion for the poor beasts, which were forcibly incited against each other; but the *human brutes*, who, unexcited by any rage or sense of injury, could spill the blood of others and lose their own, seemed to me to deserve no pity. However, I looked upon it as a proof of the martial genius of this people, and imagined I could discover in that ferocity a spirit of freedom. A Frenchman who sat near me was much offended at the barbarity of the sight, and reproached my friend who brought me thither with the sanguinary disposition of the English, in delighting in such spec-

tacles. My friend agreed with him in general, and allowed that it ought not to be encouraged in a civilized state: but a gentleman who was placed just above them cast a very sour look at both, and did not seem at all of their opinion. He was dressed in a short black wig, had his boots on, and held in his hand a long whip, which, when the fellow fought stoutly, he would crack very loud by way of approbation. One would have thought by his aspect that he had fought some prizes himself, or at least that he had received a good part of his education in this place. His discourse was as rough as his figure, but did not appear to me to want sense. ‘I suppose, Sir,’ said he to my friend, ‘that you have been bred at court, and do not relish the Bear-garden: but let me tell you, that if more people came hither, and fewer loitered in the drawing-room, it would not be worse for Old England: we are indeed a *civilized state*, as you are pleased to call it; but I could wish, upon certain occasions, we were not quite so *civil*. This gentleness and effeminacy in our manners will soften us by degrees into slaves; and we shall grow to hate fighting in earnest when we do not love to

‘ see it in jest. You fine gentlemen are for
 ‘ the taste of modern Rome, squeaking eu-
 ‘ nuchs and corruption; but I am for that of
 ‘ ancient Rome, gladiators and liberty. And
 ‘ as for the barbarity which the foreigner there
 ‘ upbraids us with, I can tell him of a French
 ‘ king whom their nation is very proud of,
 ‘ that acted much more *barbarously*; for he
 ‘ shed the blood of millions of his subjects
 ‘ out of downright wantonness, and butcher-
 ‘ ed his innocent neighbours without any
 ‘ cause of quarrel, only to have the glory of
 ‘ being esteemed *the greatest prize-fighter* in
 ‘ Europe,

LETTER IV.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

IT is the law of England, that when a debtor
 is insolvent, his creditors may shut him up
 in prison, and keep him there if they please
 for all his life, unless he pays the whole of
 what he owes. My curiosity led me the other
 day to one of those prisons; my heart is still
 heavy with the remembrance of the objects I
 saw there. Among the various causes of their
 undoing, some are of so extraordinary a kind,
 that I cannot help relating them to thee. One
 of the prisoners, who carried in his looks the
 most settled melancholy, told me he had been
 master of an easy fortune, and lived very hap-
 pily a good while, till he became acquainted
 with a lawyer, who in looking over some old
 writings of his family, unluckily discovered
 certain parchments that gave him a right to
 an estate in the possession of one of his neigh-
 bours: upon which he was persuaded to go to
 law; and, after prosecuting his suit for twenty
 years with a vexation that had almost turned
 his brain, he made the lawyer's fortune, redu-
 ced his neighbour to beggary, and had no
 sooner gained his cause, but his creditors seized
 on both estates, and sent him to enjoy his vic-
 tory in a gaol.

A second informed me that he was a citizen,
 and born to a considerable estate; but, being
 covetous to improve it, had married a very
 rich heiress, who was so vastly *genteel* in her
 expences, and found so many ways of *doing*
credit to herself and her husband, that she
 quickly sent him from his new house near the
 court, to the lodgings in which I found him.
 ‘ Why did not you divorce her,’ said I to him,
 ‘ when you found that her extravagance would
 ‘ be your ruin?’—‘ Ah, Sir!’ replied he, ‘ I
 ‘ should have been a happy man if I could
 ‘ have caught her with a gallant; I might

‘ then have got rid of her by law: but, to my
 ‘ sorrow, she was virtuous as well as ugly;
 ‘ her only passions were equipage and gaming.’
 I was infinitely surprized that a man should
 wish to find his wife an adulteress, or that he
 should be obliged to keep her to his undoing
 only because she was not one.

Another said he was a gentleman of a good
 family, and having a mind to rise in the state,
 spent so much money to purchase a seat in par-
 liament, that though he succeeded pretty well
 in his views at court, the salary did not pay
 the debt; and being unable to get himself
 chose again at the next election, he lost his
 place and his liberty both together.

The next that I spoke to was reputed the best
 scholar in Europe; he understood the Oriental
 languages, and talked to me in very good
 Arabick.

I asked how it was possible that so learned a
 man should be in want, and whether all the
 books he had read could not keep him out of
 gaol. ‘ Sir,’ said he, ‘ those books are the
 ‘ very things that brought me hither. Would
 ‘ to God I had been bred a cobbler! I should
 ‘ then have possessed some useful knowledge,
 ‘ and might have kept my family from starv-
 ‘ ing: but the world which I read of, and that
 ‘ I lived in, were so very different, that I was
 ‘ undone by the force of speculation.’

There was another who had been bred to
 merchandize; but, being of too lively an
 imagination for the dulness of trade, he ap-
 plied himself to poetry, and neglecting his
 other business, was soon reduced to the state
 I saw him in: but he assured me he should not
 be long there; for his lucky confinement hav-
 ing given him more leisure for study, he had
 quitted poetry, and taken to the mathema-

ticks, by the means of which he had found out the longitude, and expected to obtain a great reward which the government promised to the discoverer. I perceived he was not in his perfect senses, and pitied such odd sort of phrenzy; but my compassion was infinitely greater for some unhappy people who were shut up in that miserable place, by having lost their fortunes in the public funds, or in private projects, of which this age and country have been very fruitful, and which, under the fallacious notion of great advantage, drew in the unwary to their destruction. I asked in what

dungeon they were confined, who had been the undoers of these wretched men? but, to my great surprize, was informed that the *contrivers* of such wicked projects had less reason than most men in England to be afraid of a gaol. 'Good Heaven!' said I, 'can it be possible that, in a country governed by laws, the innocent who are cheated out of all should be put in prison, and the villains who cheat them left at liberty!' With this reflection I ended my enquiries, and wished myself safe out of a land where such a mockery of justice is carried on.

LETTER V.

SELIM, TO MİRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

I Was the other day in a house where I saw a sight very strange to a Persian; there was a number of tables in the room, round which were placed several sets of men and women: they seemed wonderfully intent upon some bits of *painted paper* which they held in their hands. I imagined at first they were performing some magical ceremony, and that the figures I saw traced on the bits of paper were a mystical talisman or charm: what more confirmed me in this belief was the grimaces and distortions of their countenances, much like those of our magicians in the act of conjuring. But enquiring of the gentleman that introduced me, I was told they were at *play*, and that *this* was the favourite diversion of both sexes.

'We have quite *another* way of *diverting* ourselves with the women in Persia,' answered I. 'But I see no signs of mirth among them: if they are merry, why don't they laugh or sing, or jump about? If I may judge of their hearts by their looks, half of these *revellers* are ready to hang themselves!' — 'That may be,' said my friend; 'for very likely they are losing more than they are worth.' — 'How!' said I, 'do you call that *play*?' — 'Yes,' replied he, 'they are never thoroughly pleased unless their whole fortunes are at stake: those *cards* you see them hold are to decide whether he who is now a *man of quality* shall be a *beggar*, or another who is now a *beggar*,

and has but just enough to furnish out one night's play, shall be a *man of quality*.

'The *last*,' said I, 'is in the right; for he ventures nothing: but what excuse can be thought on for the *former*? Are the nobility in England so indifferent to wealth and honour, to expose them without the least necessity? I must believe that they are generally *sure of winning*, and that those *they* play with *have the odds against them*.

'If the chance was only *equal*,' answered he 'it would be tolerable; but their adventures engage them at *great advantage*, and are too wise to leave any thing to Fortune.

'This comes,' said I, 'of your being allowed the use of wine. If these gentlemen and ladies were not quite *intoxicated* with that cursed liquor, they could not possibly act so absurdly. But why does not the government take care of them when they are in that condition? Methinks the fellows that *rob* them in this manner should be brought to justice.'

'Alas,' answered he, 'these *cheats* are an innocent sort of people; they only prey upon the *vices* and *luxury* of a *few particulars*: but there are *others* who raise estates by the *miseries* and *ruin* of their country; who *game* not with their *own* money, but with that of the *publick*, and securely *play away* the substance of the *orphan* and the *widow*, of the *husbandman* and the *trader*.

'Till justice is done upon these, the others
' have a right to impunity; and it is no scan-
' dal to see *gamesters live like gentlemen*, where
' *stock-jobbers live like princes*.'

LETTER VI.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

THOU wouldst be astonished to hear some women in this country talk of love; their discourses about it are as refined as their notions of Paradise, and they exclude the pleasure of the senses out of both. But however satisfied they may be in the world to come with such visionary joys, it is my opinion, that the nicest of them all, if she were to enjoy, her paradise here, would make it a Mahometan one. I had lately a conversation on this subject with one of these *Platonicks*, for that is the title they affect: in answer to all her pretty reasonings, I told her the following tale of a fair lady who was a *Platonick* like herself.

THE LOVES OF LUDOVICO AND
HONORIA.

THE city of Genoa has been always famed above any town in Europe for the refinement of its gallantry. It is common there for a gentleman to profess himself the humble servant of a handsome woman, and wait upon her to every publick place for twenty years together, without ever seeing her in private, or being entitled to any greater favours than a kind look or a touch of her fair hand. Of all this sighing tribe, the most enamoured, the most constant, and the most respectful, was Signor Ludovico.

His mistress, Honoria Grimaldi, only daughter to a senator of that name, was the greatest beauty of the age in which she lived, and at the same time the coyest and most reserved. So great was her nicety in the point of love, that although she could not be insensible to the addresses of Signor Ludovico, yet she could not bring herself to think of marrying her lover, which, she said, was admitting him to freedoms entirely inconsistent with the respect that character requires. In vain did he tell her of the violence of his passion for her: she answered, that her's for him was no less violent; but it was his mind she loved, and could enjoy that without going to bed to

him. Ludovico was ready to despair at these discourses of his mistress: he could not but admire such fine sentiments, yet he wished she had not been quite so perfect. He writ her a very melancholy letter, and she returned him one in verse full of sublime expressions about love, but not a word that tended to satisfy the poor man's impatience. At last he applied himself to her father; and, to engage him to make use of his authority, offered to take Honoria without a portion. The father, who was a plain man, was mightily pleased with this proposal, and made no difficulty to promise him success. Accordingly he very roundly told his daughter, that she must be married the next day, or go to a nunnery. This dilemma startled her very much. In spite of all her repugnance to the marriage bed, she found something about her still more averse to the idea of a cloister. An absolute separation from Ludovico was what she could not bear: it was even worse than an absolute conjunction. In this distress she did not know what to do: she turned over above a hundred romances to search for precedents; and, after many struggles with herself, resolved to surrender upon terms. She therefore told her lover that she consented to be his wife, provided she might be so by degrees; and that, after the ceremony was over, he would not pretend at once to all the rights and privileges of a husband, but allow her modesty leisure to make a gradual and decent retreat. Ludovico did not like such a capitulation; but, rather than not have her, he was content to pay this last compliment to her caprice. They were married, and at the end of the first month he was very happy to find himself arrived at the full enjoyment of her lips.

While he was thus gaining ground inch by inch, his father died, and left him a great estate in the island of Corsica. His presence was necessary there; but he could not think of parting from Honoria.

They embarked together; and Ludovico had good hopes, that he should not only take possession of his estate, but of his wife, too, at his arrival. Whether it was that Venus, who is said to be born out of the sea, was more powerful there than at land, or from the freedom which is usual aboard a ship, it is sure, that, during the voyage, he was indulged in greater liberties than ever he had presumed to take before: nay, it is confidently asserted, that they were such liberties as have a natural and irresistible tendency to overcome all scruples whatsoever. But, while he was sailing on with a fair wind, and almost in the port, Fortune, who took a pleasure to persecute him, brought an African corsair in their way, that quickly put an end to their dalliance, by making them his slaves.

Who can express the affliction and despair of this loving couple, at so sudden and ill-timed a captivity! Ludovico saw himself deprived of his virgin-bride, on the very point of obtaining all his wishes; and Honoria had reason to apprehend, that she was fallen into rougher hands than his, and such as no considerations could restrain. But the martyrdom she looked for in that instant was unexpectedly deferred till they came to Tunis. The corsair, seeing her so beautiful, thought her a mistress worthy of his prince; and to him he presented her at their landing, in spite of her own and her husband's tears.—O unfortunate end of all her pure and heroical sentiments! Was it for this that her favours were so long and so obstinately denied to the tender Ludovico, to have them ravished in a moment by a rude barbarian, who did not so much as thank her for them? But us leave her in the seraglio of the Dey, and see what became of Ludovico after this cruel separation.

The corsair finding him unfit for any labour, made use of him to teach his children musick, in which he was perfectly well skilled. This service would not have been very painful, if it had not been for the remembrance of Honoria, and the thought of the brutalities she was exposed to: these were always in his head night and day, and he imagined that she had by this time killed herself rather than submit to so gross a violation. But while he was thus tormenting himself for one woman, he gave

equal uneasiness to another. His master's wife saw him often from her window, and fell violently in love with him. The African ladies are utter strangers to delicacy and refinement. She made no scruple to acquaint him with her desires, and sent her favourite slave to introduce him by night into her chamber. Ludovico would fain have been excused, being ashamed to commit such an infidelity to his dear Honoria; but the slave informed him, that if he hoped to live an hour, he must comply with her lady's inclinations; for that in Africk refusals of that kind were always revenged with sword or poison. No constancy could be strong enough to resist so terrible a menace; he therefore went to the rendezvous at the time appointed, where he found a mistress infinitely more complying than his fantastical Italian. But in the midst of their endearments they heard the corsair at the door of his wife's apartment. Upon the alarm of his coming, the frightened lover made the best of his way out of the window; which, not being very high, he had the good to get off unhurt. The corsair did not see him; but, by the confusion his wife was in he suspected that somebody had been with her. His jealousy directed him to Ludovico; and though he had no other proof than bare suspicion, he was determined to punish him severely, and at the same time secure himself for the future. He therefore gave orders to his eunuchs to put him in the same condition with themselves, which inhuman command was performed with a Turkish rigour far more desperate and compleat than any such thing had been ever practised in Italy. But the change this operation wrought upon him so improved his voice, that he became the finest singer in all Africk. His reputation was so great, that the Dey of Tunis sent to beg him of his master, and preferred him to a place in his own seraglio. He had now a free access to his Honoria, and an opportunity of contriving her escape: to that end he secretly hired a ship to be ready to carry them off, and did not doubt but he should find her very willing to accompany his flight. It was not long before he saw her, and you may imagine the excess of her joy, at so strange and agreeable a surprize.

'Can it be possible,' cried she, 'can it be possible that I see you in this place! O my

‘ dear Ludovico! I shall expire in the pleasure of your embrace. But by what magick could you get in, and deceive the vigilance of my tyrant and his guards?’

‘ My habit will inform you,’ answered he in a softer tone of voice than she had been used to. ‘ I am now happy in the loss which I have sustained, since it furnishes me with the means of your delivery. Trust yourself to me, my dear Honoria, and I will take you out of the power of this barbarian, who has so little regard to your delicacy. You may now be happier with me than you was before, as I shall not trouble you with *those coarse solicitations* which gave you so much uneasiness. We will love with the purity of angels, and leave sensual enjoyments to the vulgar, who have not a relish for higher pleasures.’

‘ How!’ said Honoria, ‘ are you really no man?—’ ‘ No,’ replied he; ‘ but I have often heard you say, that your love was only to my mind; and that, I do assure you, is still the same.’—‘ Alas,’ said she, ‘ I am sorry mine is altered: but, since my being here, I am turned Mahometan, and my religion will not suffer me to run away with an unbeliever. My new husband has taught me certain doctrines unknown to me before, in the practice of which I am resolved to live and die. Adieu! I tell thee, my conscience will not permit me to have a longer conversation with such an infidel.’

Thus ended the loves of Ludovico and Honoria.

LETTER VII.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

I HAVE received thy answers to my letters with a pleasure which the distance I am at from my friends and country render greater than thou wouldst believe: I find the every impatient to be informed of the government and policy of this country, which I promised to send thee some account of: but though I have been diligent in my enquiries, and lost no time since my arrival here, I am unable to answer the questions thou demandest of me, otherwise than by acknowledging my ignorance.

I have, for instance, been often assured that the English parliament is a check to the king's authority; and yet I am informed, that the only way to advancement at court, is to gain a seat in parliament.

The house of commons is the representative of the nation; nevertheless there are many *towns* which send no deputies thither, and many hamlets almost uninhabited that have a right of sending *two*. Several members have never seen their electors, and several are elected by the *parliament* who are rejected by the *people*. All the electors swear not to *sell* their voices, yet many of the candidates are undone by the expence of *buying* them. This whole affair is involved in deep mystery and inexplicable difficulties.

Thou askest if *commerce* be as flourishing as formerly. Some whom I have consulted on that head say, it is now in its meridian; and there is really an appearance of its being so, for luxury is prodigiously increased, and it is hard to imagine how it can be supported without an inexhaustible trade: but *others* pretend, that *this very luxury* is a proof of its decline; and they add, that the *frauds* and *villainies* in all the *trading* companies are so many inward poisons, which if not speedily expelled, will destroy it entirely in a little time.

Thou wouldst know if *property* be so safely guarded as is generally believed. It is certain that the power of a king of England cannot force an acre of land from the weakest of his subjects; but a *knaveish attorney* will take away his whole estate by those very *laws* which were designed for its security. Nay, if I am not misinformed even those who are chosen by the people to be the great guardians of property, have sometimes taken more from them in one session of parliament, for the most useless expences, than the most absolute monarch could venture to raise upon the most urgent occasions.

These, Mirza, are the *contradictions* that perplex me. My judgment is bewildered in uncertainty; I doubt my own observations, and

distrust the relations of others. More time and better information may, perhaps, clear them up to me; till then, modestly forbids me to impose

my conjectures upon thee, after the manner of Christian travellers, whose prompt decisions are the effect rather of folly than penetration.

LETTER VIII.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

AS I now understand English pretty well, I went last night with some friends to see a play. The principal character was a young fellow; who, in the space of three or four hours that the action lasted, cuckolded two or three husbands, and debauches as many virgins. I had heard that the English theatre was famous for killing people upon the stage, but this author was more for *propagating* than *destroying*.

There were a great many ladies at the representation of this modest performance; and though they sometimes hid their faces with their fans, (I suppose for fear of shewing that

they did *not* blush) yet in general they seemed to be much delighted with the *fine gentleman's* heroical exploits. 'I must confess,' said I, 'this entertainment is far more *natural* than the opera; and I do not wonder that the ladies are *moved* at it:' but if in Persia we allowed our women to be present at such spectacles as these, what would signify our bolts, our bars, our eunuchs? Though we should double our jealousy and care, they would soon get the better of all restraint, and put in practice those lessons of the stage which it is so much pleasanter to ACT than to BEHOLD.

LETTER IX.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

A FRIEND carried me lately to an assembly of the *beau monde*, which is a meeting of men and women of the first fashion. The crowd was so very great, that the two sexes promiscuously pressed one another in a manner that seemed very extraordinary to Oriental eyes. I observed a young man and a beautiful young woman sitting in a window together, and whispering one another with so much earnestness, that neither the great noise in the room, nor number of passengers who rubbed by them continually, gave them the least disturbance: they looked at one another with the most animated tenderness; the lady especially, had in her eyes such a mixture of *softness* and *desire*, that I expected every moment to see them *withdraw*, in order to satisfy their mutual impatience in a manner that even the *European liberty* would not admit of in so publick a place. I made my friend take notice of them, and asked him *how long they had been married?* He smiled at my mistake,

and told me, they were *not* married, that the lady, indeed, had been married about a year and a half to a man that stood at a little distance; but that *gentleman* was an unmarried man of quality, who made it his business to corrupt other men's wives. That he had begun the winter with this lady; and that this was her *first affair* of that sort, her husband and she having married for *love*.

As I had heard of many employed in the same manner, and could not perceive that they did any thing else, I asked my friend if there was any *seminary*, any *public foundation*, for educating young men of quality to this *profession*; and whether they could carry on the business without frequent interruption from the respective husbands. 'I will explain the whole matter to you,' says he. 'There is indeed no publick foundation or academy for this purpose: but it depends upon the private care of their several parents, who, if I may use the expression, *negatively* breed them up to this business, by

making them entirely unfit for *any other*: for, lest their sons should be diverted from the profession of *gallantry* by a dull application to *graver* studies; they give them a very superficial tincture of learning, but take care to instruct them thoroughly in the more showish parts of education, such as musick, dressing, dancing, &c. by which means, when they come to be men, they naturally prefer the gay and easy conversation of the fair-sex, and are well received by them. As for the husbands; they are the people in the world who give them the least disturbance; but, on the contrary, generally live in the strictest intimacy with those who intend them the favour of *cuckoldom*. The marriage contract being here perpetual, though the causes of it are of short duration; the most sensible men are desirous of having some assistance to support the *burdensome perpetuity*. For instance, every man marries either for *money*, or for *love*. In the first case the money becomes his own as soon as the wife does; so that,

having *had* what *he wanted* from *her*, he is very willing she should *have* what *she wanted* from *any body* rather than from him. He is quiet at home, and fears no *reproaches*.

In the latter case, *the beauty* he married soon grows familiar by uninterrupted possession: his own greediness surfeited him; he is ashamed of his disgust, or at least of his indifference, after all the transports of his first desire; and gladly accepts terms of domestick peace through the *mediation of a lover*.

There are, indeed, some exceptions: some husbands, who, preferring an old mistaken point of honour to real peace and quiet at home, disturb their wives pleasures; but they are very few, and are very ill looked upon.

I thanked my friend for explaining to me so extraordinary a piece of *domestick æconomy*; but could not help telling him, that, in my mind, *our Persian method* was more reasonable, of having *several wives* under the care of *one eunuch*; rather than *one wife* under the care of *several lovers*.

LETTER X.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN:

From London.

WE have often read together, and admired the little history of the Troglodytes, related by our countryman Usbec*, with a spirit peculiar to his writings. Unequal as I am to the imitation of so excellent an author, I have a mind, in a continuation of that story, to shew thee by what steps, and through what changes; the original good of society is overturned, and mankind become wicked and more miserable in a state of government; than they were when left in a state of nature.

CONTINUATION OF THE HISTORY OF
THE TROGLODYTES.

THE Troglodytes were so affected with the virtue of the good old man who refused the crown which they had offered, that they determined to remain without a king. The love

of the publick was so strong in every particular, that there was no need of authority to enforce obedience. The law of nature and uncorrupted reason was engraven on their hearts; by that alone they governed all their actions, and on that alone they established all their happiness. But the most perfect felicity of mortal men is subject to continual disturbance. Those *barbarians*, whom they had defeated some time before, stirred up by a desire of revenge, invaded them again with greater forces. They fell upon them unawares, carried off their flocks and herds, burnt their houses, and led their women captive; every thing was in confusion, and the want of order made them incapable of defence. They soon found the necessity of uniting under a single chief. As the danger required vigour and alacrity, they pitched upon a young man of distinguished courage, and

* Vide Montesquieu's Persian Letters from Paris. Vol. I. Letter XI. to XIV.

placed him at their head. He led them on with so much spirit and good conduct, that he soon forced the enemy to retire, and recovered all the spoil.

The Troglodytes strewed flowers in his way; and, to reward the service he had done them, presented him with the most beautiful of the virgins he had delivered from captivity. But, animated by his fortune, and unwilling to part with his command, he advised them to make themselves amends for the losses they had sustained, by carrying the war into the enemy's country; which, he said, would not be able to resist their victorious arms. Desirous to punish those wicked men, they very gladly came into his proposal. But an old Troglodyte, standing up in the assembly, endeavoured to persuade them to gentler councils. 'The goodness of God,' said he, 'O my countrymen! has given us strength to repulse our enemies, and they have paid very dear for molesting us. What more do you desire from your victory than peace and security to yourselves, repentance and shame to your invaders? It is proposed to invade them in your turn, and you are told it will be easy to subdue them. But to what end would you subdue them, when they are no longer in a condition to hurt

you? Do you desire to tyrannize over them? Have a care that, in learning to be tyrants, you do not also learn to be slaves. If you know how to value liberty as you ought, you will not deprive others of it; who, though unjust, are men like ourselves, and should not be oppressed.'

This wise remonstrance was not heeded, in the temper the people was then in. The sight of the desolations that had been caused by the late irruption, made them resolve on a violent revenge. Besides, they were now grown fond of war, and the young men especially were eager of a new occasion to signalize their valour. Greater powers were therefore given to the general; and the event was answerable to his promises, for in a short time he subdued all the nations that had joined in the league against the Troglodytes. The merit of this success so endeared him to that grateful people, that, in the heat and riot of their joy, they unanimously chose him for their king, without prescribing any bounds to his authority. They were too innocent to suspect any abuse of such a generous trust; and thought that when virtue was on the throne, the most absolute government was the best.

LETTER XI.

SÉLIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

THE first act of the new king was to dispose of the conquered lands. One share of them, by general consent, he allotted to himself, and the rest he divided among those who were companions of his victory. Distinction of rank and inequality of condition were then first introduced among the Troglodytes: some grew rich, and immediately comparison made others poor. From this single root sprung up a thousand mischiefs; pride, envy, avarice, discontent, deceit, and violence. Unheard of disorders were committed; nor was any regard paid to the decisions of ancient custom, or the dictates of natural justice. Particulars could no longer be allowed to judge of right; it became necessary to determine it by stated laws. The whole nation applied to

the prince to make those laws, and take care of their execution. But the prince, unequal alone to such a difficult task, was obliged to have recourse to the oldest and wisest of his subjects for assistance. He had not yet so forgot himself, by being seated on a new-erected throne, as to imagine that he was become all-sufficient, or that he was placed there to govern by his caprice. It was therefore his greatest care how to supply his own defects by the counsels of those who were most famed for their knowledge and abilities.

Thus a senate was formed, which, with the king, composed the legislature; and thus the people freely bound themselves, by consenting to such regulations as the king and senate should decree.

LETTER XII.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

THE institution of laws among the Troglodytes was attended with this inevitable ill effect, that they began to think every thing was right which was not legally declared to be a crime. It seemed as if the natural obligations to virtue were destroyed, by the foreign influence of human authority; and vice was not shunned as a real evil, but grew to be thought a forbidden good.

One Troglodyte said to himself—‘I have made advantage of the simplicity of my neighbour, to over-reach him in a bargain: he may reproach me perhaps, but he cannot punish me; for the law allows me to rob him with his own consent.’

Another was asked by a friend for a sum of money, which he had lent him some years before.

‘Have you any thing to shew for it?’ answered he.

A third was implored to remit part of his tenant’s rent, because the man, by unavoidable misfortunes, was become very poor. ‘Do not you see,’ replied he, ‘that he has still enough to maintain his family? By starving them he may find money to pay me, and the law requires him so to do.’

Thus the hearts of the Troglodytes were hardened. But a greater mischief still ensued; the laws, in their first framing, were few and plain, so that any man could easily understand them, and plead his own cause without an advocate.

Some inconveniencies were found to flow from this: the rules were too general and loose; too much was left to the equity of the judge; and many particular cases seemed to remain undetermined and unprovided for. It was therefore proposed, in the great council of the nation, to specify all those several exceptions; to tie the judges down to certain forms; to explain, correct, add to, and reserve, whatsoever might seem capable of any doubtful or different interpretations. While the matter was yet in deliberation, a wise old senator spoke thus:

‘You are endeavouring, O Troglodytes, to amend what is defective in your laws; but know that, by multiplying laws, you will certainly multiply defects. Every new explanation will produce a new objection, and at last the very principles will be lost on which they were originally formed. Mankind may be governed, and well governed, under any laws that are fixed by ancient use: besides their being known and understood, they have a sanctity attending them which commands obedience: but every variation, as it discovers a weakness in them, so it lessens the respect by which alone they can be effectually maintained. If subtleties and distinctions are admitted to constitute right, they will equally be made use of to evade it; and if justice is turned into a science, injustice will soon be made a trade.’

LETTER XIII.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

AS the old man foretold, it came to pass. The laws were explained into contradictions, and digested into confusion. Men could no longer tell what was their right, and what was not. A set of Troglodytes undertook to find it out for all the rest: but they were far from doing it out of pure benevolence;

their opinions were sold at no little price, and, how false soever they might prove, in the event of the cause, the money was never to be returned: nay, the longer the dispute could be protracted, the more the parties concerned were to pay. This point being once well established, causes that before were dispatched in

half an hour, now lasted half a century. There were three courts placed one above another: on the door of the lowest was writ, '*Law*;' on that of the second, '*Equity*;' and on the highest, '*Common Sense*.' These courts had no connection with one another, and a quite different method of proceeding. No man could go to the last without passing through one of the former; and the journey was so tedious, that very few could support the fatigue or the

expence. But there was one particular, more strange than all the rest. It was very seldom that a man could read a word of the parchment by which he held his estate; and they made their wills in a language which neither they nor their heirs could understand.

Such were the refinements of the Troglodytes, when they had quitted the simplicity of nature; and so bewildered were they in the labyrinth of their own laying out.

LETTER XIV.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN,

From London.

THE religion of the Troglodytes had been hitherto as simple as their manners. They loved God as the author of their happiness; they feared him as the avenger of injustice; and they sought to please him by doing good. But their morals being corrupted, their religion could not long continue pure: superstition found means to introduce itself, and completed their depravation. Their first king, who had been a conqueror, and a law-giver, died, after a long reign, extremely regretted and revered by his subjects. His son succeeded, not by any claim of hereditary right, but the free election of the people, who loved a family that had done them so many services. As he was sensible that he owed his crown to their veneration for his father, he endeavoured to carry that veneration as high as possible. He built a tomb for him, which he planted round with laurels, and caused verses to be solemnly recited in praise of his achievements. When he perceived that these honours were well received in the opinion of the publick, he thought he might venture to go farther. He got it proposed in the senate, that the dead monarch should be deified, after the example of many nations round about them, who had paid the same compliment to their kings. The senators were become too good courtiers, not to give into so agreeable a piece of flattery, especially as their own honour was concerned in raising the character of their founder; and the people, seduced by their gratitude, thought that those virtues, which had rendered him the protector and father of his country, very justly entitled him to a subordinate share of divinity.

It is not to be conceived how many evils this alteration produced.

Then first the Troglodytes were made to believe that their God was to be gained by rich donations, or that his glory was concerned in the worldly pomp and power of his priests. 'A temple,' said those priests, 'is like a court; you must gain the favour of the ministers, or your petitions will not be received.' As the people remembered that their new deity had once been a king, this doctrine seemed plausible enough, and the priests grew absolute on the strength of it. They procured to themselves excessive wealth, exemptions from all publick burdens, and almost a total independence upon the civil authority. That the comparison between the temple and the court might hold the better, a greater number of ceremonies were invented, and magnificence of dress was added to them as essential to holiness. The women came warmly into this, and were still more zealous than the men in their attachment to the exterior part of devotion. By degrees the *invisible God*, whom their fathers had worshipped alone, was wholly forgot; and all the vows of the people were paid to the idol, whose superstitious worship was better adapted to human passions, and to the gain of the priests. Expiations, lustrations, sacrifices, processions and pilgrimages, made up the whole of religion. Thus the piety of the Troglodytes was turned aside from reality to form: and it was no longer a consequence, that a very religious man was a very honest man.

LETTER XV.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

IN my last letter I told thee how much the Troglodytes were depraved in their notions, and in their manners, from their idolatry. By the arts of the priesthood, their corruption encreased every day: and *virtue*, instead of being assisted, was overturned by *religion itself*. It was common for a Troglodyte to say—‘ I will plunder my neighbour or the publick: for the anger of our God may be appeased by an offering made out of the spoil.’

Another quieted his conscience in this manner: ‘ I am indeed a very great villain, and have injured my benefactor; but I am a constant attender on all processions, and have crawled thrice round the temple upon my knees.’

A third confessed to a priest, that he had defrauded his ward of an estate. ‘ Give half of it to our order,’ said the confessor, ‘ and we will freely endow you with the rest.’

But the mischief did not stop even here. From sanctifying trifles, they proceeded to quarrel about them: and the peace of the society was disturbed, to know which imperti-

nence should be preferred. This was the work of the priests, who took upon them to declare what was most agreeable to their god; and declared it differently, as it happened that their passions or interests required. But how slight soever the foundation was, a dispute of this nature never failed to be warmly carried on. Nobody concerned himself about the morals of another; but every man’s opinions were enquired into with the utmost rigour: and woe to those who held any that were disliked by the ruling party; for though neither side could tell the reason why they differed, the difference was never to be forgiven. An aged Troglodyte endeavoured to put a stop to this pious fury, by representing to them, that their ancestors, who were better men, had no disputes about religion; but served their God in the only unity required by him, an unity of affection. All the poor man got by this admonition was, to be called an atheist by all the contending sects; and, after suffering a thousand persecutions, compelled to take refuge in another land.

LETTER XVI.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

THE court had a deeper interest in the establishment of the idolatrous priesthood among the Troglodytes, than was at first attended to, or foreseen. The very nature of their office particularly attached them to the crown. They were servants of a deified king: and it was no very great stretch of their function, to deify the living monarch also. Accordingly they preached to all the people, with an extraordinary warmth of zeal, that the family then reigning was *divine*; that they held the crown, not by the will of society, but by a pre-eminence of nature; that to resist their pleasure, was resisting God; and that every man enjoyed his life and estate by their grace, and at their disposal. In consequence of these doctrines, his *sacred majesty* did just

what he thought fit. He was of a martial genius, and had a strong ambition to enlarge his territories. To this end he raised a mighty army, and fell upon his neighbours without a quarrel.

The Troglodytes lost their blood, and spent their substance, to make their prince triumphant, in a war which could not possibly turn to their advantage; for the power and pride of their tyrant increased with his success. His temper, too, became fiercer and more severe by being accustomed to slaughter and devastation; so that his government grew odious to his subjects. Yet the dazzling glory of his victories, and the divinity they were taught to find about him, kept them in awe and supported his authority. But Providence would

not suffer him any longer to vex mankind: he perished, with a great part of his army, by the united valour of many nations who had allied themselves against his encroachments. Content with having punished the aggressor and author of the war, they immediately

offered a peace to the Troglodytes, upon condition, that all should be restored which had been taken from them in the former wars. That nation, humbled by their defeat, very willingly parted with their conquests to purchase their repose.

LETTER XVII.

SELIM TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

UNDER their third king, who succeeded to his father upon a new notion of hereditary and divine right, the spirit of the government was wholly changed. He was young, and of a temper addicted to ease and pleasure; yet bred up with high conceits of kingly power, and a royal disregard to his people's good. There was a mixture of bigotry in his disposition, which gave the priests a great advantage over him; and as his predecessor had governed by them, they now governed by him. The people, too, in imitation of their prince, soon contracted another character; they began to polish and soften all their manners. The young Troglodytes were sent to travel into Persia; they came back with new dresses, new refinements, new follies, and new vices. Like a plague imported from a foreign country, luxury spread itself from these travellers over all the nation. A thousand wants were created every day, which nature neither suggested nor could supply. A thousand

uneasinesses were felt, which were as unnatural as the pleasures that occasioned them. When the minds of the Troglodytes were thus relaxed, their bodies became weak. They now complained that the summer was too hot, and the winter was too cold. They lost the use of their limbs, and were carried about on the shoulders of their slaves. The women brought their children with more pain, and even thought themselves too delicate to nurse them: they all lost their beauty much sooner than before, and vainly strove to repair it by the help of art. Then first physicians were called in from foreign lands, to contend with a variety of new distempers, which intemperance produced: they came; and the only advantage was, that those who had learned to live at a great expence, now found the secret of dying at a greater.

Such was the condition of the Troglodytes, when by the benefit of a lasting peace, they tasted the sweets of plenty, and grew *polite*.

LETTER XVIII.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

THE ancient Troglodytes were too busy in the duties and cares of society, to employ much of their thoughts in speculation. They were skilful in mechanicks and agriculture, the only science for which they had any use.

Experience taught them the properties of many medicinal herbs, roots and plants, with which they cured the few ailments that they were subject to in their serene and temperate life.

At their leisure they amused themselves with

musick and poetry, and sung the praises of the Divine Being, the beauties of nature, the virtues of their countrymen, and their own loves. They shewed a wonderful force of imagination in a great number of fables which they invented, under most of which was concealed some moral sentiment; but for history, they contented themselves with some short accounts of publick transactions, drawn from the memory of the oldest men among them, and written without any art; having no party disputes, no seditions, no plots, no intrigues

of state, to record. The alteration of their government and manners produced a change also in this respect. A great many people withdrew themselves entirely from the offices of life, and became a burden to their family and country, under a notion of study and meditation. One set of them very modestly undertook to explain all the secrets of nature, and account for her operations. Another left nature quite behind, and fell to reason about immaterial substances and the properties of spirits. A third professed to teach reason by a rule; and invented arguments to confute common sense*. These philosophers (for so they stiled themselves) were to be known from all mankind by a certain air made of bashfulness and presumption. To distinguish themselves from the vulgar, they forgot how to say or do one common thing like other men.

This rendered their behaviour very awkward, and they were conscious of it; for which reason they came little into company: yet in private their pride swelled to such a pitch, that they imagined they were arrived at the very top of human merit, and looked down with contempt on the greatest generals and best servants of the state. Among the various speculations that this modern fashion of philosophizing produced, there were two more pernicious than the

rest, and which greatly contributed to the corruption and ruin of the people. One was, that vice and virtue were in themselves indifferent things, and depended only on the laws of every country: the other, that there was neither reward nor punishment after this life. It has already been observed how many defects the Troglodytes found in their laws, and how many quibbles were invented to elude them. But still there was some restraint upon their actions, while a sense of guilt was attended with remorse, and the apprehension of suffering in another state. But by these two doctrines men were left at perfect liberty to sin out of the reach of the law; and virtue was deprived of glory here, or the hopes of recompence hereafter. There was a third notion, less impious indeed, but of very ill consequence to society, which placed all goodness and religion in a *recluse and contemplative way of life*.

The effect of this was, to draw off many of the best and worthiest men from the service of the publick, and administration of the commonwealth, at a time when their labours were most wanted to put a stop to the general corruption. It is hard to say, which was most destructive; an opinion that, like the former, emboldened vice; or such a one as rendered virtue impotent and useless to mankind.

LETTER XIX.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

WHILE the principles of the people were thus depraved, and their understandings taken off from their proper objects, the court became the centre of immorality, and every kind of folly. Though flattery had been always busy there, yet the former kings, who were frequently at war, had been used to a certain military freedom; and there were not wanting men about them who had courage to tell them truth; but the effeminacy of the present set of courtiers took from them

all spirit as well as virtue; and they were as ready to suffer the basest things, as to act the most unjust. The king, wholly devoted to his pleasures, thought it sufficient for him to wear the crown, without troubling himself with any of the cares and duties belonging to it. The whole exercise and power of the government was lodged in the hands of a grand vizir, the first of that title which the Troglodytes had ever known. It seemed very strange to them at the beginning to see the royalty

* This passage is not to be understood as designing any reflection upon men of *true learning*, but as a censure of the different kinds of *false learning*; such as the subtilties of metaphysics and logick, and the natural philosophy of Descartes and others, who presume to explain and account for all things by *systems* drawn out of their own imagination.

transferred to their fellow subject, and many thought it was debasing it too much. The priests themselves were at a loss how to make out that this sort of monarchy was divine; however, they found at last that the grand vizir was a god by office, though not by birth. If this distinction did not satisfy the people, the court and the priests were not much concerned about it. But a prime minister was not the only novelty these times produced.

The Troglodytes had always been remarkable for the manner in which they used their women. They had a greater esteem for them than any other of the eastern nations: they admitted them to a constant share in their conversation, and even entrusted them with their private affairs; but they never suspected that they had a genius for publick business; and that not only their own families, but the state itself, might be governed by their direction. They were now convinced of their mistake. Several ladies appeared together at the helm: the king's mistress, the mistress of the vizir, two or three mistresses of the vizir's favourite officers, joined in a political con-

federacy, and managed all matters as they pleased. Their lovers gave nothing, and acted nothing but by their recommendation and advice. Sometimes, indeed, they differed among themselves, which occasioned great confusions in the state; but by the pacifick labours of good subjects and the king's intercession, such unhappy divisions were composed, and business went quietly on again. If there was any defect in the politicks of these female rulers, it was, that they could never comprehend any other point or purpose in the art of government but so much *profit to themselves*.

The history of the Troglodytes has recorded some of their wise and witty sayings:

One of them was told that, by the great decay of trade, the principal bank of the city would be broke. 'What care I?' said she; 'I have laid my money out in land.'

Another was warned, that if better measures were not taken, the Troglodytes threatened to revolt. 'I am glad to hear it,' replied she; 'for if we beat them, there will some rich confiscations fall to me.'

LETTER XX.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

PAINFUL experience had, by this time, taught the Troglodytes what their fathers were too happy to suspect, that human nature was not perfect enough to be trusted with *unlimited* power: they saw an evident necessity of restraining that which had been given to their kings, as well for the dignity of the crown itself, as for the good of the commonwealth.

The whole nation unanimously concurred in this resolution, and that unanimity could not be resisted: they therefore considered by what means to reform their government, and did it with equal vigour and moderation. It was decreed that the crown should be preserved to the prince then reigning, out of respect to the family he was of; but that he should wear it under certain limitations which divided his authority with the senate.

To prevent the mischiefs that might arise from evil ministers, and the too great power of any favourite, they declared, that the mi-

nisters of the king were the servants of the people, and could not be protected by the court, if they were found disloyal to the nation:

Under these wise regulations the shattered state recovered itself again; their affairs were managed with more discretion, and many public grievances were redressed. They thought that, in limiting their monarchy, they had cut the root of all their evils, and flattered themselves with a permanent felicity. But they quickly discovered that this new system was not without its inconveniencies. Very favourable opportunities were sometimes lost by the unavoidable slowness of their councils, and it was often necessary to trust more people with the secret of public business than could be relied on with security. There were many evils which the nature of their government obliged them to connive at, and which grew as it were out of the very root of it. The abuse of liberty was inseparable, in

may points, from liberty itself, and degenerated into a shameless licentiousness. But the principal mischief attending on this change, was the division of the senate into parties. Different judgments, different interests and passions, were perpetually clashing with one another, and by the unequal motion of its wheels the whole machine went but heavily along.

Yet one advantage arose from this disorder, that the people were kept alert, and upon their

guard. The animosities and emulation of particulars secured the commonwealth; as, in a seraglio, the honour of the husband is preserved by the malice of the eunuchs, and mutual jealousies of the women.

Upon the whole, the Troglodytes might have been happy in the liberty they had gained, if the same publick spirit which established, could have continued to maintain it.

LETTER XXI.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

THERE was in the senate a certain man of great natural cunning and penetration, factious, enterprising, versed in business, and, above all, very knowing in the disposition of the times in which he lived. This man came secretly to the king, and entertained him with the following discourse.

‘ I perceive, Sir, you are very much cast down with the bounds that have been set to your authority; but perhaps you have not lost so much as you imagine. The people are very proud of their own work, and look with great satisfaction on the outside of their new-erected government; but those who can see the inside too, find every thing too rotten and superficial to last very long.

‘ The two things in nature the most repugnant and inconsistent with each other, are the love of liberty, and the love of money: the last is so strong among your subjects, that it is impossible the former can subsist. I say, Sir, they are not HONEST enough to be FREE. Look round the nation, and see whether their manners agree with their con-

stitution. Is there a virtue which wants does not disgrace, or a vice riches cannot dignify? Has not luxury infested all degrees of men amongst them? Which way is that luxury to be supported? It must necessarily create a dependence which will soon put an end to this dream of liberty. Have you a mind to fix your power on a sure and lasting basis? Fix it on the vices of mankind: set up private interest against publick; apply to the wants and vanities of particulars; shew those who lead the people, that they may better find their account in betraying than defending them. This, Sir, is a short plan of such a conduct as would make you really superior to all restraint, without breaking in upon those nominal securities, which the Troglodytes are more attached to a great deal than they are to the things themselves. If you please to trust the management to me, I shall not be afraid of being obnoxious to the spirit of liberty, for in a little while I will extinguish every spark of it; nor of being liable to the justice of the nation, for my crime itself shall be my protection.’

LETTER XXII.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

THERE is a very pretty, fair-complexioned girl, who lodges in a house over-against me. She was always staring at me from her window, and seemed to solicit my regards

by a thousand little airs that I cannot describe, but which touched me still more than all her beauty: at last I became so enamoured of her, that I resolved to demand her in marriage.

Accordingly, I went to visit her in form, and was received by her mother, a widow gentlewoman, who desired very civilly to know my business.

'Madam,' said I, 'I have a garden at Ispahan adorned with the finest flowers in the east; I have the Persian jasmine, the Indian rose, the violet of Media, and the tulip of Candahar: but I have lately beheld an English lily more fair than all these, and far more sweet, which I desire to transplant into my garden. This lily, Madam, is now in your possession; and I come to you, that I may obtain it.'

The old lady, not conceiving what I meant, began to assure me very faithfully that I was mistaken, for she had neither lily nor rose belonging to her.

'The lily,' returned I, 'is your lovely daughter, whom I come to ask of you for my wife.'

'What do you propose to settle on her?' replied she. 'That is the first point to be considered.'

'I will do by her very handsomely,' answered I; 'I will settle upon her—*two black eunuchs*, an expert old midwife, and six or seven very adroit female slaves.'

'Two blacks,' answered she, 'are well enough; but I should think *two French footmen* would be genteeler.'

'However, Sir, we will not quarrel about her equipage. The question is, what provision you think of making.'

'Do not trouble yourself about that,' returned I; 'she shall have meat enough, I warrant you; plenty of rice, and the best sherbet, in all Persia.'

'Do not tell me of rice and sherbet,' said the old woman; 'I ask what jointure you will give her?'

This word stopped me short, for I did not know what a jointure signified. At last she explained herself by demanding of me how her daughter was to live if I should die.

'I have an Indian wife,' answered I, 'that intends to burn herself as soon as I expire; but I would not recommend that method to your daughter.'

'How!' said she; 'you are married then already!'—'Yes,' said I; 'in Persia we are allowed to take as many women as we can keep: and some, I am sure, of the most fashionable men in England, do the same, only leaving out the ceremony.'

'It is a very wicked practice,' answered she: 'but since it is your religion so to do, and that my daughter's fortune is too small to get a husband among Christians, I am not much averse to give her to you upon reasonable terms, because I am told you are very rich.'

She had scarce spoke these words, when my little mistress, who had been listening to our discourse behind the screen, came out from her concealment, and told her mother, that if so many women were to live together, she was sure there would be no peace in the family, and therefore, she desired her to insist on a good pin-money, (that is to say, as the term was explained to me, a great independent allowance) in case her husband and she should disagree.

'What,' said I, 'young lady, do you think already of separating your interests from mine? And must I be obliged to pay my wife for living ill with me, as much as I should for living well with me?'

'No, by Hali! I will never wed a woman who is so determined to rebel against her husband, that she articles for it in the very contract of her marriage!'

LETTER XXIII.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

THERE is at London a native of Aleppo, who has resided here some years as a private agent for some merchants of that city, and passes for a Jew: they call him Zabulon, but his true name is Abdallah, the son of Abderamen. He has revealed himself to me, and I have contracted a great intimacy with

him. There never was an honest, more friendly, or more valuable man: but he is as much a bigot to all the eastern notions, and as much a stranger to every thing in England, as he was the first hour of his arrival. For my part, Mirza, I set out with a resolution to give up my hereditary prejudices, and form my

mind to bear different opinions, as my body to suffer different climates. Nay, if I may say so, I began my travels a good while before I went abroad, by reading, enquiring, and reasoning, about the manners and institutions of other countries. I had lived long enough under the yoke of an arbitrary government to see the misery of it, and value liberty: I am now come into an island where that liberty is happily established, and where I may learn to know it by its effects. This, Mirza, is the study that I pursue; and it demands the utmost attention I can give. In absolute monarchies all depends on the character of the prince, or of

his ministers; and when that is known, you have little more to learn: but in mixed governments the machine is more complex, and it requires a nicer observation to understand how they mutually check and assist each other.

When I talk to Abdallah on this subject, he tells me it is not worth my while to trouble myself about it; for that any form of government is good if it *be well administered*. But the question is, which is *most likely* to be *well administered*, that is, which has *best* secured itself, by wholesome provisions and restraints, against the danger of a *bad administration*.

LETTER XXIV.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

AS I was walking in the fields near this city the other morning, a disbanded soldier, somewhat in years, implored my charity; and, to excite my compassion, bared his bosom, on which were the scars of many wounds all received in the service of his country. I gladly relieved his wants; and, being desirous to inform myself of every thing, fell into discourse with him on the war in which he had served. He told me he had been present at the taking of ten or twelve strong towns, and had a share in the danger and glory of almost as many victories. 'How then,' said I, 'comes it to pass that thou art laid aside? Thy strength is indeed in its decline, but not yet wasted; and I should think that experience would supply the loss of youth.'—'Alas! Sir,' answered he, 'I have had a good heart, and tolerable limbs, but I want three inches more of stature: I am brave and able enough, thank God, but not quite handsome enough for a soldier.'

'How then didst thou serve so long?' re-

turned I. 'In Flanders, Sir,' said he, 'there were some thousands of such ill-looking fellows, who did very well in a day of battle, but would make no figure at a review. Besides, I have no *vote* for any county, city, or borough, in England; and therefore could not hope for any preferment in the army were I ever so *well made*.' This last objection appeared to me very odd; but of all the novelties I have met with in Europe, none ever surprized me so much, as that a qualification for military service should be supposed to consist in sinug looks and a certain degree of tallness, more than experienced courage and hardy strength.

If women were to raise and employ troops, I should not, indeed, much wonder at such a choice: but God grant our invincible sultan an army of veteran soldiers, though there were not a man among them above five feet high, or a face that would not frighten an enemy with the very looks of it!

LETTER XXV.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

THERE is a set of people in this country, whose activity is more useless than the idleness of a monkey. They are like those troublesome dreams which often agitate and perplex us in our sleep, but leave no impression behind them

when we wake. I have sent thee an epitaph made for one of these *men of business*, who ended his life and labours not long ago.

'Here lies ———, who lived three-score and ten years in a continual hurry.

‘ He had the honour of sitting in six parliaments, of being chairman in twenty-five committees, and of making three hundred and fifty speeches. He attended constantly twice a week at the levees of twelve different ministers of state; and writ for and against them one thousand papers. He composed fifty new projects for the better government of

the church and state. He left behind him memoirs of his own life in five volumes in folio. Reader, if thou shouldst be moved to drop a tear for the loss of so CONSIDERABLE A PERSON, it will be a SINGULAR favour to the deceased; for nobody else concerns himself about it, or remembers that such a man was ever born.’

LETTER XXVI.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

I Went with my friend the other day to a great hall, where all the courts of law were sitting together. ‘ Behold,’ said he, ‘ the temple of *justice*, the sanctuary of Privilege and right, which our mightiest monarchs have not been able to violate with impunity. Behold the lowest of our commons contending here with the highest of our nobles, unawed by their dignity or power. See those venerable sages on the bench, whose ears are deaf to solicitation, and their hands untainted with corruption. See all those twelve men, whom we call the *jury*, the great bulwark of our property and freedom. But then cast your eyes on those men in black that swarm on every side: these are the priests of the temple, who, like most other priests, have turned their ministry into a trade; they have perplexed, confounded, and encumbered law, in order to make themselves more necessary, and to drain the purses of the people.’—‘ I have heard,’ said I, ‘ that the laws of England are wisely framed and impartially administered.’—‘ The old Gothic pile we are now in,’ replied my friend, ‘ will give you

a just idea of their *structure*: the foundations of it are deep and very lasting; it has stood many ages, and with good repairs may stand many more; but the architecture is loaded with a multiplicity of idle and useless parts: when you examine it critically, many faults and imperfections will appear; yet upon the whole it has a mighty awful air, and strikes you with reverence. Then as to the administration of our laws, the difference between us and other countries is little more than this, that there they sell justice *in the gross*, and here we sell it *by retail*. In Persia the *çadi* passes sentence for a round sum of money; in England the judge indeed takes nothing; but the attorney, the advocate, every officer and retainer on the court, raise treble that sum upon the client. The condition of justice is like that of many people of quality; they themselves are above being bought, but every *servant* about them must be *feed*, or there is no *getting at them*. The disinterested spirit of the lady is of no advantage to the suitor; he is undone by the rapine of *her dependants*.’

LETTER XXVII.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

I Told thee, in my last letter, a conversation I had with my friend upon the practice of law in this country. ‘ What is peculiar to us,’ continued he, ‘ in judicial proceedings, is, that no *discretionary power* is lodged either in the judge or the jury; but they are to direct and determine altogether by the *letter of the law*.

‘ In France, and other parts of Europe,

the judge is trusted with such a power to vary from the law in certain points, according to the dictates of his conscience, and the reason of the case. But in England, conscience, reason, right, and justice, are confined to the words of the law, and the established meaning thereof. No doubt this is productive of many hardships; particulars must often suffer by it; yet in the main it is

‘ a wholesome restraint, and beneficial to liberty: for it is generally found, that in other countries, where they are not so strictly tied down, the judge’s conscience is apt to depend too much on the king’s, and the rule of equity is a very uncertain measure, which passion, prejudice, or interest, can easily change.

‘ These latter times have, indeed, a good deal departed from the ancient methods of judicature in matters of property, by encouraging applications to the *Chancery*, which is a court of equity, where he who presides in it judges alone, without any jury, and with a much greater latitude than other courts; but whether more evil than good does not attend on this practice, may well be questioned. Thus much is certain, that causes are not shortened by it, though one might have expected that advantage from it at least.’—‘ I have been told,’ said I, ‘ that whatever time they may take in passing through that court, they have often a further journey to make before they come to a final decision.’—‘ It is true,’ replied he, ‘ they may be carried from thence by an appeal to the House of Lords, who judge in the last resort. And if the constitution had not lodged there a judicature superior to that of the *chancellor*, so much of the property of the subject would entirely

depend upon his opinion, that the parliament would have reason to put in again their claim to a right which they demanded in the reign of Edward III. of *nominating this officer themselves*.

‘ When an appeal,’ said I, ‘ is made to the lords, by what rules do they judge? If by no other than those of natural equity, I can then understand, that every lord who has common sense may be supposed to be capable of such a judicature: but if they proceed by the rules of the courts below, and according to principles, usages and determinations established there, that is a *science* of which few are capable; and in that sense they cannot be *judges born*. Two or three, at most, of their body, would then have competent knowledge for the performing a duty, which the constitution of England expects from *all*. And when so few are to judge, their being too much divided in affection or interest, at some junctures of time; at others, their being too much united; might, I should think, have very bad consequences. But what if the chancellor himself should be *the only lord in the house* enough possessed of *that knowledge* to lead the rest, where would be then the use of appealing from his decrees?’

To this my friend answered nothing: and I thought that his silence wanted no explanation.

LETTER XXVIII.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

A French gentleman was boasting the other day, in a company where I was, of the academies founded by the late king for the support and reward of arts and sciences.

‘ You have a pleasant way, said he, ‘ here in England, of encouraging a man of wit. When he is dead, you build him a fine tomb, and lay him among your kings; but while he is alive, he is as ill received at court, as if he came with a petition against the ministry. Would not the money you have laid out upon the monuments of two or three of your poets, have been better bestowed in giving them bread when they were living, and wanted it?’—‘ This might have been formerly the case,’ replied the Englishman; ‘ but it is not so now. A man of true genius is at present so much favoured by the publick, which is the best of

all patrons, his works are so greedily bought up, and such regard is shewn him every way, that he has no need to depend upon a court for protection, or for subsistence.

‘ And, let me add, that the honours which are paid to a deceased man of wit have something in them more generous and disinterested than pensions bestowed on slavish terms, and at the price of continual panegyric.

‘ We have a *very great poet now alive*, who may boast of one glory to which no member of the French academy can pretend; viz. that he never flattered any man *in power*; but has bestowed immortal praise upon those whom, for fear of offending men *in power*, if they had lived in France under the same circumstances, no poet there would have dared to praise.’

LETTER XXIX.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

THERE is a *Christian* doctor, who at my first arrival here took the trouble to visit me very often, with no other view, as I could find, but merely to make a *Christian* of me; in which design he has been single hitherto, such a zeal being very much out of fashion.

But, what is more extraordinary, I was told the other day, that his *preferment in the church* had been lately *stopped* at the instance of the *musti* of this city, on a supposition of his being turned Mahometan, and that all the proof brought against him was the commerce he formerly had with me.

When I heard this, I waited on the *musti*, and offered to testify that the doctor was a Christian, as far as I could judge by all I saw of

him, during the time of our acquaintance: but he refused to admit my testimony in this case, because, as he said, I was myself a *mis-believer*; and insisted on the doctor's supposed *apostacy*, as an undoubted fact, which *shocked* him beyond measure.

'If he is a *Mussulman*,' said I, he must be *circumcised*: there is a *visible mark* of orthodoxy in our religion; but I should be glad to know what is the *visible mark* of yours. If it be *meekness*, or *charity*, or *justice*, or *temperance*, or *piety*, all these are most *conspicuous* in the *doctor*: but I find that none of these can *prove* him to be a *Christian*. What, therefore, is the *characteristick* of his *accusers*? And *how* do they *prove* themselves to be *Christians* * ?

LETTER XXX.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

THE principles and practice of toleration prevail very strongly in this country: I myself have felt the effects of it very much to my advantage. The better sort of people are no more offended at the difference of my faith from theirs, than at the difference of my dress: the mob, indeed, seem surprized at me for both, and cannot comprehend how it is possible to make such mistakes, but they rather condemn than hate me for them; and I have yet been affronted by nobody but a drunken priest, who denounced damnation against me, for refusing to pledge him, *to the prosperity of the Church of England*, in a liquor forbidden by our law.

This has not always been the temper of

the English. They have formerly waged war against Mahometans, only because they were so; they have kindled fires against hereticks, though what was heresy in one age has been orthodoxy in another; nay they have involved their country in all the miseries of civil discord, upon points of no greater moment than whether a table ought to be placed in the middle of the church, or at one end of it.

I must own to thee, Mirza, there is nothing I abhor so much as persecution: it seems to me no less ridiculous in its principles, than dreadful in its effects. One would think, that the great diversity of opinions among mankind should incline men a little to suspect that their

* It is supposed this letter alludes to the objections made to the promotion of the late Doctor Rundle. [Dr. Thomas Rundle, prebendary of Durham, and archdeacon of Wilts, being recommended to the king by Lord Chancellor Talbot, to whom he was chaplain, for the bishoprick of Gloucester, on the death of Bishop Sydal, his appointment was strenuously opposed by Bishop Gibson, from a notion of the doctor's being a deist. In consequence of this opposition, the Lord Chancellor was at length induced to withdraw his recommendation; Dr. Benson was promoted to the English bishoprick, and Dr. Rundle to the bishoprick of Derry in Ireland. He died April 14. 1743.]

own may possibly be wrong, especially in disputes not very essential; but to pursue all others with rage and violence, instead of pity or persuasion, is such a strain of pride and folly as can scarce be accounted for from enthusiasm itself. I have read in a Spanish author of a certain madman who rambled about Spain with sword and lance; and whomsoever he met with in his way, he required to acknowledge and believe, that his mistress Dulcinea del Toboso was the handsomest woman in the world. It was in vain for the other to reply, that he had no knowledge at all of Dulcinea, or had a particular fancy to another woman; the madman made no allowances for ignorance or prejudice, but instantly knocked him down, and never left beating him till he promised to maintain the perfections of the said lady above all her rivals. Such has been the conduct of many priests and priest-ridden princes in propagating their *spiritual inclinations*: each had his several Dulcinea, and resolved that every body should admire her as much as himself; but as this was not easily brought about, the controversy was determined by force of arms: nay, though it happened that all admired the same, they would even

quarrel about the fashion of her cloaths, and most bloody battles have been fought to decide which colour became her best. Alas, Mirza! how absurd is all this! The beauty of true religion is sufficiently shewn by its proper lustre; it needs no knight-errant to combat for it; nor is any thing so contrary to the nature of affection as constraint. Whoever is compelled to profess a faith without conviction, though it was but indifferent to him before, must grow to think it odious; as men who are forced to marry where they do not approve, soon change dislike into aversion. I will end this subject with putting thee in mind of a ceremony which is celebrated once a year by the common people of Persia, in honour of our prophet Ali. There are two bulls brought forth before the crowd, the strongest of which is called Ali, and the weaker Omar: they are made to fight, and as Ali is very sure to get the better, the spectators go away highly satisfied with this happy decision of the dispute between us and the heretical Turks.

Just in this light I regard all religious wars. Whether the combatants are two bulls or two bishops, the case is exactly the same, and the determination just as absurd.

LETTER XXXI.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

THERE is nothing more astonishing to a Mussulman than many particulars relating to the state of matrimony, as it is managed in Europe: our practice of it is so totally different, that we can hardly think it possible for men to do or suffer such things as happen here every day.

The following story, which was given me for a true one, will set this in a very full light: I wish thou mayest find it as entertaining as I am sure thou wilt find it true.

In the reign of Charles the First, King of England, lived two gentlemen, whose true names I will conceal under the feigned ones of Acasto and Septimius. They were neighbours, their estates lay together, and they had a friendship for each other, which had grown up from their earliest youth.

Acasto had an only son, whom we will call Polydore; and Septimius an only daughter, named Emilia. Though the boy was but fourteen years old, and the girl but twelve, the parents were so desirous of contracting an alliance between their families, and of uniting the two bordering estates, that they married them before either was of age to consummate the marriage, or even to understand the nature of their contract. As soon as the ceremony was performed, they sent the young gentleman abroad, to finish his education.

After four years, which he had spent in France and Italy, he was recalled by the news of his father's death, which made it necessary for him to return to England.

Emilia, who was now about sixteen, began to think he had been absent long enough, and re-

ceived him with a great deal of satisfaction. She had heard a fine character of him from those who knew him in his travels; and when she saw him, his person was so much improved, that she thought herself the happiest of women in being his wife.

But his sentiments for her were very different.

There was in his temper a spirit of contradiction, which could not bear to have a wife imposed upon him. He complained, that his father had taken advantage of his tender age, to draw him into an engagement in which his judgment could have no part. He confessed that he had no objections to the person or character of Emilia; but insisted on a liberty of choice, and declared that he looked upon his marriage to be forced and null. In short, he absolutely refused to consummate, in spite of all the endeavours of their friends, and the conjugal affection of the poor young lady, who did her utmost to vanquish his aversion. When she found that all her kindness was thrown away, the natural pride of her sex made her desire to be separated from him, and she joined with him in a petition for a divorce. The first parliament of the year *forty* was then sitting: the affair was brought before them, and it was believed that a divorce would have easily been obtained at their mutual demand. But the bishops opposed it with great violence, as a breach of the law of God, which they said would admit of no divorce, but in cases of adultery. They were answered, that the marriage was not *complete*; and that the ceremonious part, which was all that had passed between them, might as properly be dispensed with by the legislature, as any other form of law: that the young gentleman's aversion was *irrevocable*, and inconsistent with the obligation laid upon him; that therefore it would not well become the fathers of the church to put him under a manifest temptation of committing adultery; and that nothing could be imagined more unjust, than to condemn the lady to perpetual virginity, under the notion of a marriage, which, it is plain, was a mere illusion. These arguments seemed convincing to all the world except the bishops; but they persisted in their *usual unanimity*, and were so powerful by the *favour* of the court, that they carried their point in the House of Lords; and the unfortunate Polydore and Emilia were declared to

be *one flesh*, though no union had ever been between them, either in body or mind. The husband immediately paid back the wife's portion to her father; and firmly resolved that from that time forwards he would never see her more. His natural obstinacy was irritated by the constraint that was put upon him; and he took a pride to shew the world that there was no power, ecclesiastical or civil, which could oblige him to act like a married man against his inclination. The poor lady retired to a seat of her father's in the country, and endeavoured, by long absence from her husband, to forget that he had ever pleased or offended her. Two years afterwards the civil war broke out between the king and parliament. Polydore was so enraged against the bishops for obstructing his divorce, that it determined him in the chusing of his party, and made him take up arms against the king. Septimius, the father of Emilia, was as zealous a royalist, to which his hatred of Polydore contributed as much as any thing; for it was hardly possible that two such bitter enemies should be of the same side. In the course of the war, the king being worsted, the estates of many of his party were confiscated; and Septimius being one of the most active, was also one of those that suffered most. He was compelled to retire into France with what he could save out of the wreck of his estate; and carried with him his daughter, who was quite abandoned by her husband and his family.

In the mean while, the army of the parliament began to form itself into different factions. Cromwell, at the head of the Independents, acquired by degrees such an influence, that the Presbyterians were no longer a match for him: Polydore, who was devoted to that sect, threw up his commission in discontent; and, happily for his reputation, had no share in the violent proceedings, which ended in the destruction of the king, and the ancient constitution.

He continued quite unactive for some years; but at last growing weary of a life that agreed so ill with his vivacity, he determined to go and serve in the Low Countries under the great Prince of Condé, who, in the year 1654, commanded the armies of Spain against his country. Two reasons inclined Polydore to this party; first, the desire he had to learn his trade under a general of so great reputation; and, secondly, because

Cromwell had refused to enter into an alliance with that prince, though most agreeable to the interests of England. He found his highness employed in besieging Arras, and was received by him with high marks of esteem. During the siege he often signalized his courage, and supported the opinion that was spread all over Europe of the valour of the parliament officers. But the Marshal Turenne, with La Ferté and Hoquincourt, having attacked the besiegers in their lines, relieved Arras, and would have destroyed the Spanish army if the Prince of Condé had not saved it by a retreat, which was one of the greatest actions of his life. In this battle, Polydore was taken prisoner, and sent to Paris with many other Spanish officers, to continue there till they should be ransomed or exchanged. In the journey, he contracted a great intimacy with the Count d'Aguilar, brigadier under the Count de Fuenfaldagna, and one of the first gentlemen in Spain. As they travelled together several days, they very naturally acquainted one another with the principal incidents of their lives. Polydore related to Aguilar the whole story of his marriage with Emilia, and declaimed with great heat against the folly of tying two people thus together who wished nothing so much as to be loose.

'No doubt,' said the Count, 'it is most absurd: but, to say the truth, I find nothing very reasonable in the whole affair of marriage as we have made it. I do not know what it may be to other men, but to me it seems horribly unnatural to be confined to any single woman, let her be ever so agreeable.'

'If I had *chosen* a woman *freely*,' answered Polydore, 'I could be always constant to her with pleasure; but to have a companion *for life forced* upon me, I had rather row in the galleys than submit to it.'

'You are mistaken, my dear Polydore,' replied the Count, 'in fancying it so easy to be constant even to a wife of one's own choosing. I have had some experience of that kind, and know that the first choice is only good till we have made a second.'

'To prove this to you, I need only give you the history of my amours. That you may think I am telling you a romance, I will begin where romances always end; with the

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article of my marriage. I was married at four and twenty to a lady, whom I chose for her beauty and good sense, without troubling myself about her fortune; which was but small. The three or four first years that we lived together, was the happiest period of my life: I preserved all the ardour of a lover, with the freedom and tenderness of a husband. She loved me more tenderly than I did her; and if I had not left her till she gave me occasion, I believe we should be constant to this day. But I was not able to hold out any longer: all her charms were become so familiar to me, that they could not make the least impression; and I went regularly to her bed, as I did to supper, with an appetite quite palled by too much plenty. In this dull way I drudged on for a tedious twelve month, till the sight of a relation of my wife's, who came opportunely to lodge in my own house, roused me out of my lethargy. She was a beautiful creature of eighteen, just taken out of a convent to be married. She knew nothing of the world, but had a natural quickness that went farther than experience. However, as there was something a little awkward in her exterior carriage, the Countess d'Aguilar thought it proper to keep her with her for some time before her marriage, till she had instructed her how to behave herself in *publick*. I thought my instructions might be of use to her as well as my wife's, to teach her how to behave herself in *private*; and had the good fortune to make them more agreeable.

'She liked me better and better every lesson; and in proportion as her passion increased for me, she conceived a stronger aversion for the man who was designed to be her husband: and indeed she had no great reason to be fond of him, for he was a peevish, stupid, bigotted old fellow, who did nothing day or night but pray and scold. Her friends pressed the conclusion of her marriage; and, as unwilling as she was to come into it, she could not resist their importunities. Yet, to comfort me, she very fairly let me know, that she would give her virginity to me in spite of all their teeth; and, moreover, that I should have it on the *wedding night*. I represented to her the improbability

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lity of her performing *such* a promise at *such* a time; but she bid me trust to her management, and I should be satisfied.

The wedding night came; and when the company was retired, the bride-groom was surprized to see the bride dissolved in tears. He begged to know the cause of her affliction; but she would not tell him, except he swore that, when he knew it, he would do his utmost to remove it.

The poor man, in the vehemence of his love, assured her that he would do any thing to make her easy, that was not contrary to the honour of a cavalier, or the injunctions of our holy mother church.

"No," said she; "the thing I require of you will recommend you extremely to the church, as it is only to give me leave to accomplish a vow I made to the Blessed Virgin, in a fit of sickness, when my life was in great danger."

"Heaven forbid, my pretty child," replied the Don, "that I should hinder you from performing a sacred vow, to the hazard of your soul!"

"Well then," said she, "I will own to you that, in my fright, I vowed, that if I could but get well, and live to be married, I would consecrate my wedding night to the Blessed Virgin, by passing it in the bed of my waiting-woman the virtuous Isabella. And this very morning, while I slept, our Lady appeared to me in a dream, and threatened me with another fit of sickness, if I did not keep my word."

"If it be so," replied the husband, "there is no doubt but the Virgin must be served before me; and so, my dear, I wish you a good night."

Now you must know, that the virtuous Isabella was trusted with all the secrets of her mistress, and had gone between us through the whole course of our amour.

Accordingly, Madam went to bed to her waiting-woman, who had taken care to inform me of this design, and concealed me in a closet within her chamber; from whence, as soon as every body was asleep, I was admitted to the place of Isabella, and received the full acquittance of a promise I little expected to see performed.

The singularity of this adventure so de-

lighted me, that I could not help, in the vanity of my heart, discovering it to the Duke de l'Infantada, the most intimate of my friends.

He was very thankful for the confidence I reposed in him; and, to reward me for it, betrayed it instantly to my wife, whom, it seems, he had long made love to without success. As he thought that the greatest obstacle to his desires was her fondness for me, he hoped to remove it by convincing her of my falseness; but though the news of it had like to have broke her heart, it was not able to change it.

She reproached me in a manner that made my fault appear much more inexcusable. "I might complain," said she, "of the affront you have done my honour in debauching my relation; but, alas! I am only sensible to the injury you have done my love. You are grown weary of me; and I know it is impossible to regain your heart, since the single reason of your dislike must still continue, which is, that I am your wife. If any part of my behaviour had offended you, I might have changed it to your satisfaction; but this is a fault which, in spite of all my care, will grow worse every day." I endeavoured to pacify her by assurances of my future fidelity; and, really, I was so affected by her behaviour, that I seriously meant to keep my word. But our inclinations are very little in our power: my resolution soon yielded to the charms of the Countess Altamira, one of the handsomest women about the court, but the vainest, the most interested, and the most abandoned. She made it a point of honour to seduce me out of a desire to mortify my wife, with whom she had quarrelled upon some female competition of precedence or dress.

Her avarice was equal to her pride, and she made me pay dearly for her favours, though her husband was one of the richest men in Spain. I hardly ever went to her without a present of some kind or other; and my fortune began to suffer by my expence: yet I was so bewitched to her, that, though I heartily despised her, I could not help loving her to madness.

One day, when I came to see her after an absence that had raised my desires to the highest pitch, she received

‘ed me with a fullness and ill-humour that
 ‘tortured me beyond expression. I conjured
 ‘her to acquaint me with the cause of it; and
 ‘she told me, that the last time she was at
 ‘court, she had seen the Countess d’Aguilar
 ‘with a diamond-necklace on, which I had
 ‘given her the day before: that my making
 ‘such presents to another woman, in the midst
 ‘of our intrigue, was an insult she was deter-
 ‘mined not to bear; and that, since I was
 ‘grown so fond a husband, she could not but
 ‘make a conscience of disturbing our conjugal
 felicity.

‘I offered her any satisfaction she would ask;
 ‘and the malicious devil had the impudence to
 ‘tell me, that nothing could satisfy her, but
 ‘my taking away that necklace from my wife,
 ‘and giving it her, I entreated her to accept of
 ‘another twice its value; but she replied that
 ‘her honour was concerned; and in short she
 ‘would have that, and that alone. Overcome
 ‘with her importunities, I went home, and stole
 ‘it for her; but made her promise me solemnly
 ‘to be very cautious that my wife should ne-
 ‘ver see it in her possession.

‘About three days after, word was brought
 ‘me, that the Countess d’Aguilar had fainted
 ‘away in the anti-chamber of the queen, and
 ‘was gone home in great disorder to her mo-
 ‘ther’s the Countess of Pacheco.

‘I went immediately thither in such a
 ‘fright, as convinced me I loved her better
 ‘than I thought I did: but imagine my confu-
 ‘sion, when she informed me, that she fainted
 ‘at the sight of her own diamonds on the neck
 ‘of the Countess Altamira! She added, that
 ‘it was no mystery to her, nor to any body else,
 ‘how that lady came by them; and that to
 ‘save herself the mortification of any more
 ‘such publick affronts, she would no longer
 ‘live with me as my wife, but leave me at
 ‘full liberty to please myself, as my licentious
 ‘inclination should direct.

‘I used my utmost eloquence to prevail on
 ‘her to come home to me again; but she re-
 ‘mained inflexible, and said no more to all
 ‘my protestations, but that if her past con-
 ‘duct had not been able to fix my heart, she
 ‘despaired of doing it for the future.

‘After living without her half a year, I

‘was ordered to my regiment in Flanders, and
 ‘was very glad of an occasion to leave Madrid,
 ‘where the regret of her separation was such
 ‘pain to me, that it entirely sunk my spirits.
 ‘Since my arrival in the army, I have writ to
 ‘her three or four letters, but she disdained to
 ‘make me any answer; and I have reason to
 ‘believe, that her high spirit has got the bet-
 ‘ter of her love.

‘For my part, I endeavour to amuse myself
 ‘the best I can with other women: and I de-
 ‘fire, my dear Polydore, that we may be al-
 ‘ways reciprocal confidants of every intrigue
 ‘that we engage in during our stay in France.’

Polydore thanked him and assured him that,
 on his part, he should make no reserve. When
 they came to Paris, his first care was to en-
 quire what was become of Septimius and Emi-
 lia, whom he had heard no account of for many
 years. He was informed Septimius was dead,
 and his daughter gone from Paris. His curi-
 osity made him write to his friends in England,
 to ask if she was there. They answered him,
 that every body believed she was dead in
 France, having received no news of her a great
 while. Polydore was mightily pleased with
 this account, and fancied himself very happy
 in being a widower, though he had given him-
 self no trouble to support the character of a
 husband. The two friends had not resided
 long at Paris before they were exchanged for
 some French officers who were taken prisoners
 by the Prince of Condé. They returned to
 the army; but the season not permitting them
 to come to any action, they agreed to pass the
 winter at Brussels, in the court of the arch-
 duke. They had not been there above a month,
 before Aguilar acquainted his English friend
 that he had begun an intrigue with a French
 lady, who lived in a retired manner, which he
 believed was owing to her circumstances; that
 he had seen her two or three times, by means of
 a woman at whose house she lodged, whose good
 offices he had secured by a handsome bribe. He
 added, that he would carry Polydore to see her
 the next visit that he made. Accordingly, they
 went together to Mademoiselle Dalincourt, for
 that was the name of Aguilar’s new mistress. At
 their coming in, Dalincourt seemed much sur-
 prized, changed colour, and was not able to

‘speak a word. The count, alarmed at her disorder, suspected some lover had been with her; and told her, with an air of discontent, that he was sorry he came at so wrong a time. She endeavoured to shake off her confusion, and replied, that he was always very welcome; but that the gentleman he brought with him had so much resemblance of a brother of hers, who was killed in Flanders, that at first sight she could not help being struck with it in the manner they had seen. She added, that if the gentleman was as like her brother in mind, as he was in form, she should be mightily pleased with his acquaintance. She spoke this with such an air of sincerity, that the count began to think his jealousy was without foundation.

After some general discourse, she applied to Polydore, and asked him how long he had been engaged in the Spanish service; with many other more particular enquiries, which seemed to intimate a desire to know him better. Polydore was very glad of it, in hopes to serve his friend; and the count, who had no suspicion on that side, did his utmost to engage them in a friendship which he imagined would turn to his advantage.

At night, when the two gentlemen went home together, Aguilar asked his companion, what he thought of Dalincourt’s person and understanding. ‘Better of the last than the first,’ answered he, ‘though both are certainly agreeable. I cannot help thinking,’ continued he, ‘that her person is not quite new to me; but I cannot recollect where I met with her, except it was at Paris when I was there a boy.’—‘You will do well to improve your acquaintance now,’ replied the count; ‘and to give you an opportunity of doing it, I will send you there to-morrow, to make my excuses for being obliged to hunt with the archduke, instead of waiting upon her, as I intended. I know my dear Polydore will employ all his wit and eloquence to set his friend’s passion in the best light; and while he is with her, I shall have less uneasiness in being away.’ Polydore promised him all the services he could do him; but said, he wished he had got a mistress too, to make the party even.

The next day he went to her, and said a great deal in praise of Aguilar, to discover what she thought of him. She answered him

with terms of a cold esteem, but nothing that gave him the least encouragement to believe she was in love. He then endeavoured to persuade her of the violence of the count’s passion for her; but she assured him, that this was the only subject she did not care to hear him talk of. He returned to his friend, quite discouraged at her manner of proceeding, and told him there was nothing to be hoped for. The count shewed him a letter he had just received from his confidante, the lady of the house, which advised him not to think of gaining Dalincourt by a timorous respect; but to offer her at once a handsome settlement, which the straitness of her fortune would make her listen to much more kindly than she did to his fine speeches.

‘This indeed may do something,’ said Polydore; ‘for I found, by her discourse, that she had been reduced, by a series of misfortunes, to a condition very much beneath her birth.’ In conclusion, they agreed to make a trial, whether she was to be bought or not; and Polydore was made the bearer of a letter which contained a very liberal proposal. She read it, looked at Polydore some time without saying a word, and at last burst out into a flood of tears.

‘I thought,’ said she, recovering her voice, ‘that it had not been in the power of my ill destiny to make me more unhappy: but I now find that my misfortunes have sunk me lower than ever I was aware of; since two gentlemen, whose esteem I wished to gain, think so meanly of me, as to imagine me a proper person to receive *such a letter*. But know, Sir, that I am as much a stranger to infamy, as I am to happiness; and have a spirit superior to all the wrongs that your insolent sex can put upon me. Had not you disgraced yourself by the scandalous employment of endeavouring to seduce me with a dirty bribe, I should have been happy in seeing you often here; but must now desire you to trouble me no more, and to tell your friend, as my answer to his letter, that I would sooner *give myself to a footman, than sell myself to a prince*.’

Polydore was infinitely struck with this reception: every word she uttered pierced him to the heart; and he looked

upon her as a miracle of virtue, such as he never had any notion of before. He returned to the count in great confusion, and acquainted him with the ill success of his commission. Aguilar, more in love with her than ever, writ a most submissive letter to beg her pardon, but she instantly sent it back unopened. When he found all his courtship was ineffectual, he left Brussels in despair, and retired to a villa of one of his friends, where he resolved to stay till the opening of the campaign. In the mean while, Polydore, who continued still at Brussels, was in a situation little easier than his friend. Mademoiselle Dalincourt took up all his thoughts; he repeated to himself a thousand times the last words he heard her speak, and admired the spirit that appeared in them to a degree of adoration.

Not being able to bear her absence any longer, he sent to beg that he might see her again, upon a business wholly relating to himself. She admitted him, and began the conversation, by strictly forbidding him to name the count in any thing he had to say to her. 'I have no inclination to name him,' replied he; 'for I would willingly forget that I ever knew him. I am sensible that I wrong him, in declaring to you, that I love you more than life; yet, as his passion is quite destitute of hope, why should not I solicit for a heart to which he has no pretensions? But, be my conduct right or not in regard to him, to you, Madam, it shall ever be the most honourable. I come to offer you my whole fortune upon such terms as your virtue need not blush at. I am a widower, and free to marry whom I please; my estate is sufficient for us both; and I am happy to think it in my power to raise you to that rank which you were born to. This, Madam, is the only reparation by which I can atone for the affront I did your character; and, if you refuse to accept of it, my despair will be equal to my love.'

The lady answered him, with blushes, that she was highly sensible of the sentiments he expressed for her; that she liked his person, and admired his understanding; but that, to her misfortune, she was married already; and therefore could say nothing to his proposal. 'Good Heaven,' cried Polydore, 'you are

married! And who then is your husband?—'The most unworthy of mankind,' answered she; 'one who has abandoned me to the malice of my fortune, and does not know at this time what is become of me, nor troubles himself about it.'—'He is indeed unworthy,' replied the lover, 'who is possessed of such a treasure, and can neglect it. But, Madam, employ me in your revenge: command my sword to pierce the monster's heart, and tear it from his bosom.' 'No,' said she; 'your safety is more dear to me than the desire of revenge. All I ask of you is, to swear that you will never be like that husband; but continue to love me equally when you know me better: upon this condition, I will grant all the favours which my duty will allow; and, perhaps, your future conduct may prevail upon me to throw off all restraint.'

The happy Polydore swore every thing she desired, and she permitted him to see her when he pleased; but, being informed by him of the treachery of her friend at whose house she lodged, they agreed to make their appointments at another place.

They continued this commerce for some time without any interruption, till the Count d'Aguilar had notice of it from his confidante, who perceived it in spite of all their caution.

Never was rage equal to his at this discovery. He writ to Polydore, reproaching him with his breach of friendship in the bitterest terms, and required him to meet him with his sword, behind the walls of a nunnery that was situated about two leagues out of Brussels. Polydore accepted of the challenge, and met him at the place appointed: he attempted to justify himself; but the count had not the patience to hear him out; they fought with great fury a good while, till the fortune of Polydore prevailed, and the count fainted away with the loss of blood from two or three wounds which he had received. The other seeing him fall, thought him dead, and made off with the utmost precipitation.

Just at that instant came by a coach and six, which was driving towards the nunnery: a lady who was in it seeing a gentleman lying weltering in his blood, stopped her coach, and went to try if she could assist him. At the sight

of the face, she fetched a scream, and fell upon the body in a swoon. Her servants concluding it to be some one that she was much concerned for, carried them both into the nunnery, where the lady soon came to herself, and the count also began to shew signs of life, his spirits being agitated by the motion. He was immediately put to bed, and a surgeon sent for, who declared his wounds to be dangerous but not mortal. While they continued uncertain of his cure, the lady who brought him into the nunnery waited constantly day and night at his bedside, and nursed him with a care that would not yield to a moment of repose. As her face was always covered with a veil, he took her to be one of the nuns, and was astonished at a charity so officious. When he grew better his curiosity increased, and he ardently pressed her to let him know to whom he owed such great obligations. 'Are you a nun, madam?' said he: 'I hope you are not: for it would afflict me infinitely if I was never to see you more, after leaving a house where you have done me so many favours.'—'The lady for whom you fought,' answered she, 'will make you soon forget the loss of me: and, though I am not a nun, you will never see me out of the limits of these walls.'

'How, Madam!' said he, 'was you not out of them when you found me on the ground, and saved my life?'

'Yes,' replied she; 'I was returning from a visit to a convent in the town; but I will take care not to stir from hence while you are at Brussels, because you are the only man in the world I would avoid.'

This speech so surprized him, that for some time he was not able to make her any answer. At last he told her, that her actions and her words entirely disagreed, and that he could not think himself so hateful to her as she said, when he reflected how kindly she had used him.

'These riddles shall be cleared to you,' answered she, 'when you are perfectly recovered: till then content yourself with knowing that I cannot hate you, but am as much determined to avoid you as if I could.'

Thus ended a conversation which left the count in a perplexity not to be described.

He saw her no more for a few days; but when she heard that his strength was quite re-

turned, she came to him one morning, and spoke thus:

'If you will know who she is that was so afflicted when your life was in danger; that nursed you so carefully in your illness; and is resolved to quit you for ever when you are well; think of your former gallantries at Madrid, of your present passion for a mistress that despises you, and your ingratitude to a wife that always loved you; think of all this, and you will not wonder any longer at my actions or my words. Yes, Aguilar, I am that wife, whose fate it is to be acquainted with all your infidelities, and to smart for all your follies.'

As she said this, she lifted up her veil, and shewed the astonished count a well known face, which he little expected to have seen in Flanders. All the passions that can agitate the heart of man, shame, remorse, love, gratitude, invaded him in that moment. He threw himself at her feet, and with many tears implored her to forgive him.

She raised him, and assured him of her pardon; nay more, of her affection: 'But my person,' said she, 'I am determined shall be ever separated from you. I have had too many proofs of your inconstancy to hope that any obligations can engage you: you will never be faithful to me alone, and I disdain to share you with another. It is happiness enough for me that I have been the instrument of preserving your life, though you risked it for the sake of another woman; and all the return I ask of you is, to think of me sometimes with kindness, but never to attempt to see me more.'

Aguilar was on the rack to hear her talk in so resolute a stile; but he flattered himself it was owing to her jealousy of Mademoiselle Dalincourt. Being impatient to make her easy on that head, he dispatched one of his servants with a letter to acquaint that lady with his recovery. He begged her earnestly to come to him at the nunnery; and, if possible, to bring her lover with her. Polydore had absconded a few days, till he heard that the count was out of danger; after which he continued very publicly his addresses to Dalincourt.

While the messenger was bringing them to the nunnery, Aguilar demanded of his

wife by what accident she came into Flanders.

'You know,' said she, 'that after my discovery of your amour with the Countess Altamira, I retired to my mother's house, and remained there till your departure for the army.'

'Soon afterwards I had the misfortune to lose my mother; and what particularly aggravated my grief, was the knowledge that her concern at your ill usage of me had hastened her death.'

'These afflictions made Madrid so uneasy to me, that I could not bear to stay in it any longer. Luckily, about that time I received a letter from my cousin Eugenia Donna de Montalegre, a religious of this house, to inform me of her being elected abbess; it instantly occurred to me that no place could be more proper for my retreat than a monastery, of which she was the head: so, as soon as I could settle my affairs, I left Spain, and put myself into a pension under the government of Donna Eugenia: in which manner I have lived ever since.'

She had scarce finished this account, when they were interrupted by the arrival of Polydore and Dalincourt. Madame d'Aguilar changed colour at the sight of her; but her husband embracing Polydore, assured him that he no longer looked upon him as a rival, but was glad to resign his mistress to a friend who so well deserved her. Then he related to him the manner in which his wife had tended and preserved him; and expressed so much gratitude, so much love, that if any thing could have shaken her resolution, this would certainly have done it. Mademoiselle Dalincourt seemed much affected at his relation, and told the countess she was infinitely concerned that she had been the innocent cause of her husband's danger; but that she hoped this accident would be a means of making them happy for the future, and put an end to his infidelities, and her resentment.

'My happiness too,' added she, 'is now at stake; and I have need of your friendship to support me in a discovery which I tremble to begin, but which, in justice to my honour, I am obliged to delay no longer.'

At these words she knelt down, and taking hold of Polydore's hand,—'Behold,' said she,

'my dear husband, in that Dalincourt, whom you have sworn to love eternally, behold your wife Emilia; that Emilia whom you left a bride and a virgin at sixteen: whom you imagined dead, and who will not live a moment if you refuse to acknowledge and receive her!'

'You cannot now complain that I am a wife imposed upon you: you chose me freely out of pure inclination; our parents had nothing to do in it; love only engaged us; and from love alone I desire to possess you. This is my claim; and if you are willing to allow it, I am blessed to the height of all my wishes.'

Polydore gazed on her with a silent admiration; he examined every feature over and over; then throwing his arms round her neck, and almost stifling her with kisses—'Are you really Emilia?' cried he; 'and have I confirmed my former marriage by a *new choice*, by a *choice* which I never will depart from, and which makes me the happiest of men? O my angel, what wonders do you tell me! How is it possible I find you here at Brussels, when I thought you in your grave? Explain all this to me; and let me know how much I wronged you formerly, that I may try to repair it all by my future conduct.'

Count Aguilar and his lady joining with him in a desire to know her history, she related it as follows.

THE HISTORY OF POLYDORE AND EMILIA.

YOU may remember, Polydore, that as soon as we were parted, I went to live in the country with my father being ashamed to appear in publick after the affront your capricious aversion had put upon me.

My pride was deeply wounded, but with shame I own it, my love was the passion that suffered most. I was bred to consider you as my husband; I had learned to love you from a child; and your person was so wonderfully agreeable, that I could not look upon you with indifference. Nay, such was my partiality in your favour, that I could not help admiring you for your spirit in asserting, the freedom of your choice, and justified you in my heart for a proceeding which openly I was obliged to

disapprove. In this wretched state of mind I remained some years, till the unfortunate event of the civil war deprived my father of his estate, and drove him out to seek refuge in a foreign country. We settled at Paris, where, with three or four thousand pounds, in money, and the rest of it in jewels, we maintained ourselves well enough in a private way, which pleased my melancholy better than any other. In this retreat, where we saw no company, but two or three French women that lodged in the house with us, I amused myself with learning the French tongue which I had some knowledge of before I came to France; and by speaking nothing else for three or four years, I became so very perfect in it, that it was difficult to discover by my accent that I was not born at Paris. I mention this, because it has since been of use to me, in making me pass more easily upon you for the French woman I personated. The third year of our residence at Paris, my father became acquainted with a widow-lady, the true Madame Dalincourt, whose name has since made me full amends for many injuries I have to charge her with in the sequel of my story. This woman was a native of Brabant, but married a French gentleman, who dying young, left her in very narrow circumstances. She had a sister much younger than herself, but not so handsome, who had lived with her at Paris.

My father was at that time near three score, and the widow turned of forty; yet her charms were still powerful enough to engage him in a passion for her, which nothing but dotage could excuse. It went so far, that she drew him in to marry her, and to settle upon her three thousand pounds, leaving me no more than the worth of my own jewels, which scarce amounted to a thousand. But her avarice was not satisfied with all this. There was a French nobleman who had long courted me for a mistress, and not finding me so complying as he wished, thought the best way was to buy me of my mother-in-law, whom he knew to be capable of such a bargain. He offered her a present of two thousand crowns to introduce him by night to my apartment. The wicked creature accepted of this bribe; and, taking her opportunity when my father was gone into the country, brought him late one night

into my chamber, where she imagined he would find me fast asleep. But it happened that I and Mademoiselle du Fresne, the sister of Dalincourt, had been engaged in reading a romance, which kept us up beyond our usual hour; and as her room was on the other side of the house, not to disturb the family in passing through, she went to bed to me. The romance ran so strongly in my head, that I could not sleep for thinking of it; and, perceiving that the moon shone very brightly, I got up, slipped on a night-gown, and went out to take a walk in a little garden that lay contiguous to my chamber. I had not been there above half an hour, before I heard Du Fresne call out for help; and, coming in to her assistance, saw my lover struggling with her at such advantage, that I was almost afraid I came too late. I joined my cries to her's, and the noise we made so alarmed the marquis, that he thought it best to retire as soon as possible; especially when he discovered his mistake, and that my infamous mother-in-law had put him to bed to her own ugly sister instead of me.

But, to be revenged of her for what he took to be a design of imposing upon him, he revealed to us the part she had in this affair; and bid me tell her, that he did not think the enjoyment of Mademoiselle Du Fresne worth a quarter of the money he had given her. After making this confession, he went off; and was hardly got safe out of the house, when two or three of our servants came in to us, to know what was the matter. The story soon reached my father's ears; and I was so angry at my stepmother for her intention against my honour, that in the heat of my passion I told him all that the marquis had revealed; and Du Fresne confirmed it; which imprudence we had both reason to repent of. My father was so shocked and afflicted at it, that it threw him into a fever which proved mortal. He was no sooner dead, but his loving widow turned her sister and me out of doors, and it was with great difficulty that I carried off my money and necessary apparel. In this distress, which was the greatest I ever knew, Du Fresne proposed to me to go with her to Brussels, where she had an old aunt whom she expected something from, and that would be willing to receive us. I gladly accepted her proposal, my

Spirit being too high to return to England in the condition I was reduced to. When we came to Brussels, we found that her aunt was dead, but had left her the best part of what she had, which amounted to a reasonable subsistence. We agreed that I should board with her under the name of Mademoiselle Dalincourt, and pretend I was a relation of her former brother-in-law: she not caring to say any thing of the last alliance, which had been attended with such ill consequences to us both. Upon this foot I lived with her very quietly, till the Count d'Aguilar found me out; and, by corrupting my mercenary friend, obtained more frequent access to me than I desired.

You remember the disorder I was in when he brought you first to see me: I knew you instantly; for my love had traced your image too strongly in my mind to be effaced by any length of time; whereas your indifference quickly made you lose all memory of me, and the alteration of almost fifteen years had changed my person entirely from what it was when you saw me last. I thought I should have died with the surprize: and was going as soon as I could speak, to discover myself to you; but perceiving that you did not remember me, I checked myself and invented a pretence to cover my confusion. It struck me, that I might possibly make some advantage of the disguise in which you saw me: at least, I was sure of the satisfaction of conversing with you freely, and knowing what had happened to you since our parting. When you came to me again as the confidant of the Count d'Aguilar, it was no small revenge and pleasure to me, to see you ignorantly helping another man to debauch your own wife; and I could have found in my heart to have let you succeed in your friendly mediation, as a punishment for the injuries you have done me; but my virtue soon rejected that temptation, and I thought of nothing but how to gain your esteem.

When you brought me the base proposal of Count Aguilar, it appeared to me such a mark of your contempt, that I fully resolved not to see you any more. But when you expressed a repentance of that fault, and declared a respectful passion for me, even to the offering me marriage, I yielded to the dictates of

my love, and admitted you to all freedoms but one; that I told you your future conduct might obtain; and I believe (said she blushing) you will hardly now have the same reluctance to accept it as you had formerly. But though I had thus engaged you by your promise, and still more by your inclination, my happiness was far from being fixed. While the name of Emilia was concealed, I could not tell how the knowledge of it might affect you. It was still in your power to make me miserable, by being angry with my innocent deceit; but since you have been so good to approve it, and acknowledge me for your wife, I shall make it my whole study and ambition to deserve that title, and never think of my past misfortunes; but to enhance my present happiness.

Thus Emilia ended her narration; and received the compliments of Count Aguilar and his lady, who both expressed the highest joy at her good fortune.

Polydore on his side, endeavoured to persuade the countess to follow the example of Emilia, and be reconciled to her husband. She answered him coldly, That she had too much experience of the temper of the count to trust to a sudden fit of fondness, which would wear itself out in a few months. That she was neither so young, nor so handsome now, as before their separation: how then could she flatter herself that he would like her better when she was really less amiable; that what she had done for him might secure her his esteem, but she had received abundant proof that his esteem could but ill secure his love. 'I know,' said she, 'the weakness of my heart: were I to live with him again, I should be jealous of him, even though he did not give me cause; and that would certainly make us both unhappy. It is better for me to leave him to his pleasures; and endeavour to secure my own tranquillity, by retiring from a world which I am unfit for.'

Polydore, finding it in vain to argue with her, and admiring the greatness of her mind, took his leave of the count, and returned to Brussels, where his marriage with Emilia was consummated almost twenty years after it was contracted!

LETTER XXII.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

I Went yesterday with one of my acquaintance to see a friend of his who has a house about twenty miles from London. He had formerly been a citizen and tradesman, but growing rich on a sudden by some lucky hit in the more profitable trade of stock-jobbing, he as suddenly set up for a judge in architecture, painting, and all the arts which men of quality would be thought to understand, and built this house as a specimen of his learning. When we came in, though it was in the midst of winter, we were carried into a room without a fire-place; and which looked, if possible, still colder than it felt. 'I suppose,' said I, 'this *stone-vault* that we are in is designed to be *the burying-place* of the family: but I should be glad to see the rooms in which they *live*, for the chiliness of these walls is insupportable to a Persian constitution.'

'I see,' said my companion, 'that you have *no taste*, or else you could not be cold in a *saloon* so beautiful as this.'

Before I had time to make him any answer, the master of the house came in; but, instead of carrying us to a fire, as I hoped he would, he walked us about all his vast apartments, then down into the offices under ground, and last into a garden, where a north-east wind, that blew very keen from off a *heath* to which it was laid open, finished what the *saloon* had begun, and gave me a cold, which took away my voice in the very instant that I was going to complain of what he made me suffer. At length we ended our observations, and sat down to dinner in a room where, by good fortune, the rules of architecture allowed us to be warm: but when the meat was served, I was in great confusion not to know how to ask for any dish of all I saw before me; for it seems the gentleman ate in the *French way*, and nothing came up to his table in its natural form: my uneasiness was still greater when, upon tasting of five or six different compositions, I found they were all mixed with the flesh of larded hogs, which I could not touch without pollution.

After losing my dinner in this manner, I was entertained all the evening with a conversation between the gentleman of the house and another man, (who they told me was an architect) so stuffed with hard words and terms of art, that I could not understand one part in five of it. They talked much of certain men called *virtuosi*, whom, by the near relation their title bore to *virtue*, I took at first to be a *sett* of rigid moralists: but upon enquiry, I discovered that they were a company of *fiddlers, eunuchs, painters, builders, gardeners*, and, above all, gentlemen that had travelled into *Italy*, who immediately came home perfect *virtuosi*, though they went out *the dullest fellows* in the world. This order of men, which is pretty numerous, (as I could collect from the discourse of *these two adepts*) assume a sort of legislative authority over the body of their countrymen: they bid one man pull down his house, and build another, which he can neither pay for nor inhabit; they take a dislike to the furniture of a second, and command him to change it for a different one more expensive and less commodious; they order a third to go and languish at an *opera*, when he had rather be hallooing in a bear-garden: it is even feared they will take upon them to decide what sort of woman every man shall be *in love with*, and prescribe a particular colour of eyes and hair for the only object of *universal inclination*.

I desired to be informed whether *this jurisdiction* had been *ancient* in this kingdom, having met with no traces of it in history.

'No,' said he, 'it is so *modern*, that all the laws of it are changed once in every seven years; and that which before was the only thing *right*, becomes at once a *high crime* and *misdeameanour*.'

Upon the whole, it appears to me to be a kind of *epidemical madness*; and I am afraid to return to my own country, for fear I should carry it with me thither, as those who have been in *Italy* bring the infection along with them into *England*.

LETTER XXXIII.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

THERE is a lady's house where I often pass my time, though I have very little intimacy with her, because it is really being in a *publick place*, and making a visit to half the town. The first time I went thither, I congratulated her on the prodigious number of her friends; and told her that she must certainly be possessed of most extraordinary perfections to attract such a variety of people, and please them all alike. But I soon found that, in all that crowd of visitants, there was hardly one who came thither on her account; but that their reason for coming was the same as her's for receiving them, because they had nothing else to do.

The last time I was there, I met a gentleman, whose character I was still a stranger to, though I was very well acquainted with his face.

'I want to know,' said I to a lady who sat next me, 'what is the merit of that gentleman over-against us, which recommends him so much to all the world? It seems to me that he does nothing, says nothing, means nothing, and is nothing; yet I always see him in good company!'

'His character,' said she, 'may be comprehended in very few words; he is a *good-natured man*.'

'I am mighty glad to hear it,' returned I; 'for I want such a man very much: there is a friend of mine in great distress, and it lies in his power to do him service.'

'No,' said she, 'he is of too indolent a temper to give himself the trouble of serving any body.'

'Then what signifies his *good-nature*?' answered I; or, how do you know that he *has any*?

During this dialogue between us, the rest of the company had turned their discourse wholly upon scandal; and few reputations were spared by them, that were good enough to be thought *worth attacking*.

The *good-natured* man sat silently attentive, and with great humanity let them abuse his absent friends as much as they thought fit.

When that was over, he began to entertain us with his sorrow for the death of a noble person, who, he said, had been his patron and benefactor: but, methought, he talked of it mightily at *his ease*; and the lady who had given me his character, whispered me, that notwithstanding his obligations and love to *the deceased*, he was now making court to *his* worst enemy, as obsequiously as he ever had to *him*.

At that instant there came in a certain colonel, who as soon as he saw my gentleman, ran up to him; and, embracing him very tenderly — 'My dear Jack,' said he, 'thou shalt be *drunk* with me to-night!'

'You know I have been ill,' said the other gently; 'and *drinking* does not agree with me.'

No matter for that,' replied the colonel; 'you must positively be drunk before you sleep, for I am disappointed of my company, and will not be reduced either to drink by myself, or to go to bed sober.'

The *good-natured man* could not resist such obliging solicitations: he kindly agreed to the proposal; and all the room expressed their apprehensions, that his *good-nature* would be the death of him some time or other.

LETTER XXXIV.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

I Had last night so extraordinary a dream, and it made such an impression on my mind, that I cannot forbear writing thee an account of it.

I thought I was transported, on a sudden, to the palace of Ispahan. Our mighty lord was sitting on a throne, the splendor of which my eyes could hardly bear: at the foot

of it were his emirs, and great officers, all prostrate on the ground in adorations, and expecting their fate from his commands. Around him stood a multitude of his guards, ready to execute any orders he should give, and strike terror into the hearts of all his subjects. My soul was awed with the majesty of the scene; and I said to myself—Can a king of England compare himself to this? Can he whose authority is confined within the narrow bounds of law, pretend to an equality with a monarch whose power has no limits but his will?

I had scarce made this reflection, when, turning my eyes a second time towards the throne, instead of the *sophi*, I saw an *eunuch* seated there, who seemed to govern more despotically than he. The *eunuch* was soon changed into a woman, who also took the *tiara* and the sword, to her succeeded another, and then a third: but before she was well established in her seat, the captain of the guards

that stood around us marched up to the throne, and seized upon it. In that moment I looked, and beheld the *sophi* lying strangled on the floor with his *vizir*, and three of his *sultanas*. Struck with horror at the spectacle, I left the palace; and, going out into the city saw it abandoned to the fury of the soldiers, who pillaged all its riches, and cut the throats of the defenceless inhabitants. From thence I made my escape into the country, which was a waste, uncultivated desert, where I found nothing but idleness and want.

‘O,’ said I, ‘how much happier is England, and how much greater are its kings! Their throne is established upon justice, and therefore cannot be overturned. They are guarded by the affections of the people, and have no military violence to fear. They are the most to be honoured of all princes, because their government is best framed to make their subjects rich, happy, and safe.’

LETTER XXXV.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

I HAD some discourse to-day with an English gentleman, who has an affectation of being thought a great *philosopher*: his pretensions to it consist in nothing else but refining away all the happiness of his life. By a great force of reasoning, he is arrived at a total *disrelish* of *himself*, and as compleat an *indifference* to *others*. ‘I am quite weary of living,’ said he to me, ‘I have gone through every thing that bears the name of pleasure, and am absolutely disgusted with it all. I have no taste for the common amusements of wine, women, or play, because I have experienced the folly of pursuing them; and as for business, it ap-

pears to me to be more *ridiculous* than any of the three. The bustle of the town disturbs my quiet, and in the country I am dying of the spleen. I believe I shall go with you into Persia, only to change the scene a little; and when I am tired of being there, take a dose of *opium*, and remove to the other world.’

I hope, Mirza, that thou and I shall never know what it is to be *so wise*; but make the best of those comforts and delights which nature has kindly bestowed upon us, and endeavour to diffuse them as wide as possible, by the practice of those virtues from which they flow.

LETTER XXXVI.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

THERE is another gentleman of my acquaintance, who is a *philosopher*, but of a species very different from him I described to thee in my last.

He is possessed of a considerable estate, which his friends are as much masters of as he: his children love him out of a principle of *gratitude*, by far more endear-

dearing than that of *duty*; and his servants consider him as a *father*, whom it would be *unnatural* for them not to *obey*.

His tenants are never hurt by drought or rain, because the goodness of their lord makes amends for the inclemency of the sky.

The whole country looks *gay* about his dwelling, and you may trace all his footsteps by his bounties.

'Is it not strange,' I have often heard him say, 'that men should be so delicate as not to bear a *disagreeable picture* in their houses, and yet force every *face* they see about them to wear a *cloud* of uneasiness and discontent?'

'Is there any object so pleasing to the eye, as the sight of a man you have obliged? or any musick so agreeable to the ear, as the voice of one that owns you for his benefactor?'

He has also a deep sense of religion; which

is so far from casting a gloom over his mind, that it is to *that* chiefly he owes his constant serenity. 'Were there no reward,' said he to me in our last conversation, 'for virtue after this life, a wise man would practise it for its own beauty and reasonableness *here*; yet the wisest man, in that case, might be unhappy from the perversity of accidents: but he who adds to the *pleasures* of *virtue* the *hopes* of *re-ligion*, has no excuse for sinking under any misfortune; and, without the extravagance of philosophical pride, may always find a resource in his mind, as much superior to all human events, as the infinite extent of eternity is beyond the short bounds of human duration.'

Such are the notions of this man concerning *happiness*; and it is probable they are not very *wrong*, for he himself is never *out of humour*, nor is it possible to be so *in his company* *.

LETTER XXXVII.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

I WENT last night with my friend to see a lady whose house is the favourite resort of the most agreeable people of both sexes. The lady herself received me with good breeding, which I found was the result of good sense: she treated me as a *stranger* that came to see, not like a *monster* that came to be seen; and seemed more desirous to appear in a good light herself to me, though a Persian, than to set me in a ridiculous one to her company. The conversation turned upon various subjects, in all which she bore a considerable, but not a petulant or over-bearing part; and with modesty shewed herself a mistress of most of the living languages, and not unacquainted with ancient and modern history.

The rest of the company had their due share of the conversation, which was carried on with spirit and good manners. One gentleman in particular distinguished himself by the superiority of his wit, accompanied with so much delicacy and politeness, that none who heard him felt themselves hurt by that *pre-eminence* which he alone seemed not to be conscious of.

His wit was all founded on good sense; it was wit which a Persian could comprehend as easily as an Englishman; whereas most that I have met with from other men, who are ambitious of being admired for that accomplishment, is confined not only to the taste of their own countrymen, but that of their own peculiar set of friends. When this gentleman had entertained us for an hour or two, with the justest, as well as liveliest remarks, both on persons and things, that I ever heard, he went away; and, to comfort us for losing him, there came in *the man of great good-nature*, whom I described to thee in one of my former letters.

This *courteous person* hearing all of us very warm in praise of the *other's* wit, joined in with us, but ended his panegyrick with a plain, though indirect insinuation, that there was a *satirical turn* in it, which rendered it very *dangerous*, and that the gentleman could not possibly be so witty but at the expence of his good-nature.

I could not help being quite angry at so impertinent and ill-grounded a reflection, on a

* This is evidently the portrait of our noble author's father.

man for whom I had conceived a great esteem, and desired to know why he supposed him to be *ill-natured*, only because he was not *dull*. 'Has he abused,' said I, 'any worthy man? has he defamed any woman of good character? If all the edge of his wit is turned on those who are justly the objects of ridicule, his wit is as great a benefit to *private life*, as the sword of the magistrate is to *the public*.'

My gentleman, fearing to be drawn into a dispute which he could not carry on without exposing the secret envy of his heart, changed the discourse; and for the rest of his stay among us, which was not very long, kept a most strict silence, and gave no other indications of life, but that of laughing whenever any body laughed, and nods and gestures of approbation to whoever spoke.

The moment he was gone, I told my friend, that I did not much wonder to see that gentleman in *mixed company*, where it was enough that he gave no offence; but that, in a select society as this was, he should be received only from a general notion of his *good-nature*, which was supported by no one action of his life, seemed to me entirely unaccountable. For, even allowing his pretensions to that title, I was surprized that such a character should be so *scarce*, as to make it so very valuable.

'I can easily conceive,' continued I, 'that the notorious reverse of that virtue would be a good reason to turn a man out of company; but I cannot think that the possession of that virtue, destitute of all others, is a reason for letting him into it.'

'If you will keep my secret,' replied my friend, 'I will tell you the whole truth; but if you discover me, I shall pass for *ill-natured* myself. You must know then, that there are about this town ten thousand such fellows as this, who, without a grain of sense or merit, make their way by reciprocally complimenting one another. Their numbers make them for-

midable, especially supported, as they are, by the fair-sex. They sneak into good company, like *dogs*, after some man of sense, whom they seem to belong to; where they neither *bark* nor *bite*, but *cringe* and *fawn*; so that neither good manners nor humanity will allow one to kick them out, till at last they acquire a sort of *right by sufferance*. They preserve their character by having no will of their own, which in reality is owing to their having no distinguishing judgment: they are all possessed of some degree of cunning; and their passions are too low and dull to break in upon it, or hurry them into the indiscretions of men of parts. Besides, they know that they are in a constant state of probation, where the least transgression damns them: they carry no compensation about them; for *active* faults will not be borne, where there are at best but *negative* virtues. The small number of people of sense are forced to submit in this, as in many other silly customs, to a tyrannical majority, and lavish undeservedly the valuable character of good-nature, to avoid being as unjustly branded with that of ill-nature themselves.'

'Might not another reason be given for it?' answered I. 'Are not *vanity* and *self-love* the great causes of not only the toleration, but the privileges these people enjoy? and does not security from censure, certainty of applause, or the discovery of an eminent superiority, prevail with those of the best parts to really like, what they only pretend to suffer, the conversation of those of the worst?'—'Very possibly' replied my friend: 'at least the *vanity* of the wisest is certainly the *comfort* of the weakest, and seems to be given as an allay to superior understandings, to preserve a certain degree of equality that Providence intended among mankind.'

LETTER XXXVIII.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

I Had yesterday the pleasure of a spectacle, than which nothing is more striking to a foreigner, because he can have a right idea of it no where else: I saw the three estates of the kingdom assembled in parliament. The king was on his throne in all his majesty; around him sat the peers in their different robes; at the bar stood the speaker of the commons, attended by the house. Accustomed as I am to the sublime court of our great emperor, I beheld this scene with much more reverence, but it was reverence mixed with love. Now, and never till now, did I see a true image of *civil government*, the support and perfection of human society. A tyrant's court is no more worthy to be compared with this assembly, than a lion's den with a temple. Here such laws as, after mature and free deliberation, have obtained the concurrence of the *nobles* and *commons*, receive the *royal assent*; nor can any

bind the people, which have not that *triple sanction*. A gentleman who came with me made me observe, that when the commons sent up the subsidies granted to the king, he *thanked them* for them, as an acknowledgment that he had no power to raise them without their consent. 'Antiently,' added he, 'supplies of money and redress of grievances went together; but such is the present happiness of our condition, that we have *more money* than ever to bestow, and *no grievances* at all to be redressed.'

'I have heard,' said I; 'that when these gifts are most liberal, they have a natural tendency, like plentiful exhalations drawn from the earth, to fall again upon the place from whence they came.'

He was going to answer me, when the house rose, and put an end to my enquiries.

LETTER XXXIX.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

THIS morning I received a visit from the gentleman under whose conduct I had been at the house of lords. After some general discourse upon that subject, he asked me what I thought of their nobility.

'I am too great a stranger,' answered I, 'to have formed a right opinion of what they are; but, if you please, I will tell you freely what I think they should be.'

'An English nobleman should be a strenuous assertor of the privileges of the people, because he is perpetually entrusted with the care of them; and at the same time desirous to preserve the just rights of the crown, because it is the source from which his honour is derived.'

'He should have an estate that might set him above dependance; and employ the superfluities, if such there were, not in

improving luxury, but in extending charity.'

'He should make his dignity easy to his inferiors by the modesty and simplicity of his behaviour; nor ever think himself too great for the lowest offices of friendship and humanity.'

'He should claim no *privilege* that might exempt him from the strictest rules of justice; and afford his *protection*, not to men *obnoxious to the law*, but to every modest virtue and useful art.'

'The character you have drawn,' replied my friend, 'though it be *rare*, yet is not *imaginary*: some there are to whom still it may belong; and it eminently exists in a young nobleman, *grandson* and *heir* to a late illustrious commander*, whose name, even in Persia, is *not unknown*.'

* Duke of Marlborough.

LETTER XL.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

THE English are blessed with some privileges which no other nation now in the world enjoys in so high a degree. One is, that they cannot be long deprived of their liberty upon suspicion of any crime, not even of treason itself, without being brought to a trial: another is, that they cannot be tortured, either to force a confession of what is laid to their charge, or a discovery of their accomplices. It is a wonderful thing, that even in many free states, these two essential rights of human nature have not been secured: for can any thing be more repugnant to natural justice, than to punish without proof of a crime? Or is there a greater punishment than long imprisonment and the infliction of violent pain, either of which is worse than death to an innocent man? From both these evils the English are guarded by their excellent laws; which have also provided, that none shall undergo the vexation and shame of a trial in a criminal cause without the consent of twelve of their countrymen, who are called the *grand jury*; nor can sentence be passed upon them, but by the unanimous voice of twelve more of their equals, with as strong provisions (in trials for treason especially) against any influence of fear or corruption, as human laws are able to frame. To these glorious privileges is added the right of being taxed by none but their representatives, of advising the king in a parliamentary

manner upon all matters of government, of enquiring into the conduct of ministers, of arraigning the guilty, and taking them out of the shelter of the throne, liberty of speech in parliament, and liberty of writing and publishing with all decent freedom what every man thinks upon public affairs.

When I consider all these advantages, and reflect on the state I am in when in my own country, exposed upon the lightest suspicion to be shut up in a prison, to be tortured there, and, if ever brought out from thence, to be tried by a partial judge, possibly by my accuser himself, to have my estate taken from me at the emperor's pleasure, having no means of redress against him or his ministers, and deprived of the power even to complain; when I reflect on all this, I cannot but look upon the lowest subject of England with envy, and with respect, as I should on a being of an order superior to mine.

But, on the other hand, were there an Englishman wicked and foolish enough, to give up the least of these rights for any temptation of fortune or power; I should look down upon him, however exalted by titles or wealth, with more contempt than upon the lowest slave in my seraglio: for, if *unwilling slavery* be the worst of misfortunes, *voluntary servitude* is the basest of crimes.

LETTER XLI.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

ABOUT a fortnight ago, I went, in company with one of my acquaintance, to see a place in this city, called the *Exchange*, which is the general rendezvous of all the merchants, not only of England, but the whole trading world. I never yet came into an assembly with so much respect as into this. 'These,' said I to my friend, 'are the most useful, and therefore the most honourable, of mankind. They are met

here to carry on the common happiness; their gains are the advantage of the publick; and their labour makes the ease of human life.'

I had scarce spoke these words, when he carried me out into a neighbouring alley, where I also saw some busy faces, but which looked, methought, very different from the others. 'These,' said he, 'are a sort of traders, whose whole business is confined within the com-

‘ pass of this alley, where they create a kind of
‘ ebb and flow, which they know how to turn
‘ to good account; but which is destructive to
‘ all trade, except *their own*. Nay, they have
‘ sometimes raised such violent *tempests here*,
‘ that half the wealth of the nation has been
‘ sunk by it.’

‘ They are then a sort of *magicians*,’ answered I.

‘ A most *diabolical one* truly,’ replied he;
‘ and, what is most wonderful, the *masters of*
‘ *the art* have the secret to render themselves
‘ *invisible*: though they are always *virtually*

‘ *present here*, they never appear to vulgar eyes;
‘ but some of their *imps* are frequently disco-
‘ vered, and by their motions the skilful in this
‘ traffick steer their course and regulate their
‘ ventures.’

While he was saying this to me, there came up to us an ill-looking fellow, and asked if we had any *stock* to sell.

My friend whispered me in the ear, that this was ‘an *imp*: I started; called on Mahomet to protect me, and made the best of my way out of the alley.

LETTER XLII.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

THAT Abdallah, whom I mentioned in a former letter, is gone from England. Thou wilt be affected with the virtue of the man, when I tell thee the cause of his departure. He sent last week to desire I would come to him; I came, and found him oppressed with the deepest sorrow. ‘ Ah, Selim,’ said he to me, ‘ I must leave thee: I must go, and discharge my duty to the best of fathers; I must give my all for him to whom I owe it.’ At these words, he put a letter into my hand, which he had just received the day before: I found by it, that his father, who was a merchant, in a voyage from Grand Cairo to Aleppo, was taken by a cruizer of the isle of Malta; and being unable himself to pay his ransom, had written to his son to do it for him. ‘ Thou knowest,’ said he to me, ‘ that I am not rich; to raise the sum demanded for my father’s liberty, I must sell all my effects, and leave myself without the means of a subsistence, except what my labour can procure me. But my own distress is not what concerns me most; the fear of poverty cannot fright me from my duty; I only grieve for the fate of my poor wife, whom the ruin of my fortune will expose to indigence and shame. It is for her sake that I have sent for you; and I conjure you, by all our friendship, by the prophet and the God whom we adore, not to refuse me the first favour I have asked.’ When he had said this, he opened the door of another

room, where I saw a beautiful woman in the Turkish habit, who, with a modesty peculiar to our eastern ladies, endeavoured to conceal herself from my regards. ‘ Come hither, Zelis,’ said my friend, ‘ and see the man whom I have chosen to protect you: see him who must shortly be your husband, in the room of the unfortunate Abdallah.’ Then, turning to me, and weeping bitterly—‘ This,’ cried he, ‘ O Selim! is the grace for which I am a suppliant: permit me to give her to a man who I know will use her well; I am resolved to divorce her this very instant, according to the power allowed me by our law, if you will consent to take her for your wife; nor could the sopher himself make you a present of greater value. If the charms of her person are not sufficient to recommend her to you, know that her mind is still fairer and more accomplished. I brought her with me into England three years ago, in all which time she has hardly stirred out of my house, nor desired any company but mine. It is impossible to be happier with a wife than I have been with her; nothing should ever have prevailed on me to part with her, but the desire to separate her from my misfortunes, and to procure her a maintenance agreeable to her birth and merit, which I am no longer able to provide for her myself.’

He had scarce ended, when the lady, tearing her hair, and beating the whitest breast I ever

saw, implored him not to think of a separation, more painful to her than any misery that poverty could reduce her to.

After many passionate expressions of her love, she declared that she would accompany him to Malta, and beg her bread with him afterwards if it was necessary, rather than stay behind in the most affluent condition. But he positively refused to let her go, and insisted upon giving her to me, as the only expedient to make him easy. 'To carry her with me,' said he, 'would be exposing her to such dangers and wants, as I cannot endure even to think of: but less can I bear the thought of leaving her here, in a nation of infidels, among women *have given up modesty*, and men who profess *to make war upon it* wherever it is to be found. Your house is the only asylum to which her virtue can safely retire. As your wife, she will be protected from any insult, even in *this land of licentiousness*.' To these words of Abdallah, Zelis replied with many *arguments*, but with more *tears*. I continued some time a silent witness of this extraordinary dispute; but

at last, seeing him determined to divorce her, I told him, I would accept her as a treasure committed to my hands, not for my own use, but to secure it for my friend: that she should remain with me under the character of my wife, but I would always be a stranger to her bed; and if at his return he found himself in circumstances sufficient to maintain her, I would restore her back again to him untouched; or, in case they should mutually desire it, carry her with me to my seraglio in the east. They were both much comforted with this assurance; and Zelis consented to stay with me, since Abdallah commanded it. The poor man embarked for Malta the following week, with his whole fortune on board for his father's ransom, and left me so touched at his filial piety, that I made an offer to pay part of it myself; but he told me I had done enough for him in taking care of what was dearest to him upon earth, and refused any further succour from me.

N. B. This story is resumed in Letter LXXVI.

LETTER XLIII.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

I lately fell into discourse with an Englishman, who has well examined the constitution of his country. I begged him to tell me what he thought of the present state of it. 'Two principal evils,' answered he, 'are making way for arbitrary power, if the court should ever be inclined to take advantage of them, viz. the abuse of our wealth and the abuse of our eloquence: the last is, if possible, more mischievous than the first; for it seduces those whom money could not corrupt: it is the most pernicious of all our refinements, and the most to be dreaded in a free country. To speak truth is the privilege of a freeman; to do it roundly and plainly, is his glory; thus it was that the ancient Romans debated every thing that concerned the common-wealth, at a time when they best knew how to govern, before Greece had infected them with rhetoric. As nothing was propounded to them with disguise, they easily judged what was

most for their honour and interest. But the thing called Eloquence here is of another kind; it is less the talent of enforcing truth, than of imposing falsehood; it does not depend on a true knowledge of the matter in debate, for generally it aims at nothing more than a specious appearance: nor is wisdom a necessary quality in the composition of an orator; he can do without it very well, provided he has the happy facility of discoursing smoothly, and asserting boldly.' I own to thee, Mirza, this account surprized me; we have no knowledge in the east of such an eloquence as this man described, it is our custom to speak naturally and pertinently, without ever imagining that there was an art in it, or that it was possible to talk finely upon a subject which we do not understand.

'Pray, Sir,' said I, 'when these orators you tell me of have been caught two or three times *in a lie*, do not you treat them with the

‘utmost contempt?---Quite the contrary,’ answered he; ‘the whole merit and pride of their profession is to *deceive*: they are to lay false colours upon every thing; and the greater the imposition is, the greater their reputation. The orator who can only persuade us to act against some of our lesser interests, is *but a genius of the second rate*; but he who can compel us by his eloquence to violate the most essential, is *an able man indeed*, and will certainly *rise very high*. I suppose it may be your custom in Persia to bestow employments on such persons as have particularly qualified themselves for them: you put the care of the army and the marine into the hands of soldiers and seamen; you make one man secretary of state, because he has been bred in foreign courts, and understands the interests of your neighbouring princes; to another you trust the revenue, because he is skilful in oeconomy, and has proved himself above the temptation of embezzling what passes through his hands.’

---‘Yes,’ replied I, ‘this is surely the right method; and I conclude it must be yours.’---

‘No,’ said he; ‘we are above those vulgar prejudices; such qualifications are not requisite among us: to be fit for any or all of these posts, one must be a *good speaker in parliament*.’---‘How!’ said I; ‘because I make a fine harangue upon a treaty of peace, am I

therefore fit to superintend an army?’---‘We think so,’ answered he: ‘And if I can plausibly defend a minister of state from a reasonable charge brought against him, have I thereby a title to be taken into the administration?’---‘Beyond dispute, in this country,’ answered he. ‘Why then, by Mahomet!’ said I, ‘your government may well be sick: what a distempered body must that be whose members are so monstrously out of joint, that there is no one part in its proper place! If my tongue should undertake to do the office of my head and arms, the absurdity and the impotency would be just the same.’

‘Yet thus,’ said he, ‘we go on; lamely enough I must confess; but still admiring our own wise policy, and laughing at the rest of the world.’

‘You may laugh,’ replied I, ‘as you think fit: but if the sultan my master had among his counsellors such an *orator* as you describe, a fellow that would prate away truth, equity, and common-sense; by the tomb of our holy prophet! he would make a *mute* of him, and set him to watch over the *seraglio* instead of the *state*.’

At these words I was obliged to take my leave, and our discourse was broke off till another meeting.

LETTER XLIV.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

THE next day I saw my friend again, and he resumed the subject of eloquence. ‘You cannot imagine,’ said he to me, ‘of what fatal consequence this art of haranguing has been to all free states: good laws have been established by wise men, who were far from being eloquent; and eloquent men, who were far from being wise, have every where destroyed or corrupted them. Look into history, you will find, that the same period which carried eloquence to its perfection, was almost always mortal to liberty. The republics of Greece, and that of Rome, did not see their most celebrated orators till the very moment that their constitutions were overturned. And how indeed should it be otherwise? When once it becomes a fashion to ad-

vance men to dignity and power, not for the good counsel that they give, but for an agreeable manner of recommending bad ones, it is impossible that a government so administered can long subsist. Is any thing complained of as amiss? Instead of redress, they give you an oration: Have you proposed a good and needful law? In exchange for that you receive an oration. Has your natural reason determined you upon any point? Up gets an orator, and so confounds you, that you are no longer able to reason at all. Is any right measure to be obstructed, or wrong one to be advanced? There is an orator always ready, and it is most charmingly performed to the delight of all the hearers.’

‘I do not know,’ said I, ‘what pleasure

' you may find in being deceived ; but I dare
' say, should these gentlemen undertake to in-
' struct a merchant in his business, or a farmer
' in his work, without understanding either
' trade or husbandry, they would only be laugh-
' ed at for their pains ; and yet when they at-
' tempt to persuade a nation to commit a thou-
' sand senseless faults, they are listened to with
' great attention, and come off with abund-
' ance of applause. But, for my part, I think
' they deserve nothing but hatred and contempt,
' for daring to play with such sacred things as
' truth, justice, and public good, in so wanton
' and dissolute a manner.'

' Most certainly,' answered he, ' they are
' very dangerous to all society ; for what is it
' they profess ? Do not they make it their boast
' that they have the power to soothe or enflame ;
' that is, in proper terms, to make us partial
' or to make us mad ? Are either of these tem-
' pers of the mind agreeable to the duty of a
' judge, or of a counsellor of state ? I maintain,
' that it would be just as proper for us to decide
' a question of right or wrong after a debauch
' of wine or a dose of opium, as after being
' heated or cooled, to the degree we often

' are, by the address of one of these skilful
' speakers.

' Wisely was it done by the Venetians, to
' banish a member of their senate, (as I have
' read they did) only because they thought he
' had too much eloquence, and gained too great
' an ascendant in their councils by that bewich-
' ing talent. Without such a caution there is
' no safety ; for we are led, when we fancy that
' we act most freely ; and the man who can
' master our affections will have but little trou-
' ble with our reason. But to shew you the
' power of oratory in its strongest light, let us
' see what it does with religion : in itself it is
' simple and beneficent, full of charity and hu-
' mility, and yet, let an eloquent Jesuit get
' up into a pulpit, what monstrous systems will
' he draw out of it ! What pride, what tyran-
' ny, will he make it authorize ! How much
' rancour and malignity will he graft upon it !
' If then the laws of God may be thus corrupt-
' ed by the taint of eloquence, do we wonder
' that the laws of men cannot escape ?'---' No,'
said I ; ' no mischiefs are to be wondered at,
' where the reason of mankind is so abused.'



LETTER XLV.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

THE conversation I repeated to thee in my
last letter, was heard by a gentleman that
sat near us, who, I have been told, has found
his account so much in eloquence, as to be in-
terested in the defence of it. Accordingly, he
attacked my friend, and told him, he was afraid
he had forgot his history, or he would have re-
collected that Demosthenes and Cicero, the two
greatest orators that ever were, employed their
rhetorick in the service of their country. ' I
' might, perhaps,' answered he, ' make some
' objections to the integrity of both ; but, al-
' lowing what you say, it amounts to no more
' than this, that eloquence may be of service
' to mankind in the possession of very good
' men ; and so may arbitrary power, of the
' greatest service : but yet we say in England,
' that it is wiser not to trust to it ; because, as
' it is generally managed, it becomes a most
' grievous oppression. And, I am sure, I can

' shew you in history as many orators that have
' abused their eloquence, as kings that have
' abused their authority : for, besides the wick-
' edness common to human nature, the vanity
' of making a bad cause appear a good one is
' in itself a dangerous temptation. When a
' man sees he is able to impose on the judgments
' of others, he must be a very honest and very
' modest one indeed, if he never does it wrong-
' fully.'---' Alas, Sir !' returned his antago-
nist, ' the generality of men are too weak to
' bear truth ! They must be cheated into hap-
' pinefs.'---' I am sure they are often *cheated*
' out of it,' replied my friend : ' nor can I
' wholly agree to your proposition in the sense
' you understand it. It may be necessary for
' the government of mankind, not to tell them
' the *whole* truth ; something may be proper to
' be hid behind the veil of policy ; but it is sel-
' dom necessary to tell them *lies*.

‘ These *pious frauds* are the inventions of very *impious men*; they are the tricks of those who make the publick good a pretence for serving their private vices. Let us consider how mankind was governed in those ages and states where they are known to have been the happiest. How was it in Athens, while the laws of Solon preserved their force? Was it then thought necessary to *lye* for the good of the commonwealth? No; the people were truly informed of every thing that concerned them; and as they judged by their natural understanding, their determinations were right, and their actions glorious: but when the orators had got the dominion over them, and they were *deceived* upon the principle you establish, what was the consequence? Their leaders became factious and corrupt, their government venal, their publick councils uncertain and fluctuating, either too *weakly fearful*, or too *rashly bold*; till at last, from generous, high-spirited freemen, they sunk into prating, contemptible slaves. In Rome,

the case was much the same; as long as they were a great and free people, they understood not these political refinements. All governments in their first institution were founded in truth and justice, and the first rulers of them were generally honest men; but, by the length of time, corruption is introduced, and men come to look upon those frauds as necessary to government, which their forefathers abhorred as destructive to it.’---‘ It does not,’ said I, belong to me to decide in this dispute: but it seems to be highly important, that *this power of deceiving for the publick good* should be lodged in safe hands. And I suppose that such among you as are trusted with it are very *constant* and *uniform* in their principles. Though the *colours* may vary, *the ground* of their conduct is still the same. What with them is the *essential* and *fundamental* interest of the nation *now*, will certainly be so *next year*: disgrace or favour can make no difference.’

LETTER XLVI.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

I Was the other day in company with a clergyman, who has the education of several young noblemen committed to his care. A trust of this importance made me regard him as one of the most *considerable* men in England. ‘ This sage,’ said I to myself, ‘ has much to answer for: the virtue and happiness of the next age will in a great measure depend on his capacity.’ I was very desirous to enter into discourse with him, that I might know if he was equal to his office, and tried all the common topicks of conversation; but on none of these was I able to draw a word from him. At last, upon some point being started, which gave him occasion to quote a Latin poet, he opened all at once, and poured forth such a deluge of hard words, composed out of all the learned languages, that though I understood but little of his meaning, I could not help admiring his elocution.

As his scholars were many of them born to an hereditary share in the legislature, I concluded

he must be thoroughly acquainted with the English constitution, and able to instruct them in the knowledge of it: but, upon asking him some questions on that subject, I found, to my very great surprize, that he was more a stranger to it than myself, and had no notions of government, but what he drew from the *imaginary republic* of a Greek philosopher. ‘ Well,’ said I, ‘ you at least instruct your scholars in Grecian and Roman *virtue*; you light up in them a *spirit of liberty*; you exercise them in *justice* and *magnanimity*; you form them to a resemblance of the *great characters* they meet with in ancient authors.’---‘ Far from it,’ said a gentleman in company; ‘ they are accustomed to *tremble at a rod*, to tell *lies* in excuse of trifling faults, to *betray their companions*, to be *spies and cowards*: the natural vigour of their spirits is broke, the natural ingenuity of their tempers varnished over, the natural bent of their genius curbed and thwarted; the whole purpose of their education is to acquire

‘ some Greek and Latin words ; by this only they are allowed to try their parts ; if they are backward in this, they are pronounced dunces, and often made so from discouragement and despair.

‘ I should think,’ said I, ‘ if *words* only are to be taught them, they should learn to speak English with grace and elegance, which is particularly necessary in a government where eloquence has obtained so great a sway.’--- ‘ That article is never thought of,’ answered he : ‘ I came myself from the college a perfect master of one or two dead languages ; but could neither write nor speak my *own*, till it was taught me by the letters and conversation of a lady about the court, whom, luckily for my education, I fell in love with.’

‘ I have heard,’ said I, ‘ that it is usual for

‘ young gentlemen to finish their studies in other countries ; and indeed it seems necessary enough by the account you have given me of them here : but if I may judge by the greatest part of those whom I have seen at their return, the *foreign masters* are no better than English, and the *foreign mistresses* not so good. ‘ Were I to go back to Persia with an English coat, an English footman, and an English *cough*, it would amount to just the improvement made in France by one half of the youth who travel thither.’--- ‘ Add to these, a taste for musick,’ replied the gentleman, ‘ with two or three terms of building and of painting, and you would want but *one taste more* to be as *accomplished* as some of the finest gentlemen that Italy sends us back.’

LETTER XLVII.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

FROM considering the education of English gentlemen, we turned our discourse to that of English ladies. I asked a married man that was in company, to instruct me a little in the course of it, being particularly curious to know the methods which could render a woman in this country so different a creature from one in Persia. ‘ Indeed, S.r,’ said he, ‘ you must ask my *wife*, not me, that question : these are mysteries I am not allowed to pry into ; when I presume to give my advice about it, she tells me the education of a lady is above the capacity of a man, let him be ever so wise in his own affairs.’--- ‘ I should think,’ said I, ‘ that as the purpose of womens breeding is nothing else but to teach them to *please men*, a man should be a better judge of *that* than any woman in the world. But pray, Sir, what in general have you observed of this *mysterious institution* ? I do not enquire into the secrets *behind the altar*, but only the outward forms of *discipline* which are exposed to the eye of all the world.’--- ‘ Why, Sir,’ replied he, ‘ the first great point which every mother aims at, is to make her girl a *goddess* if she can.’

‘ A goddess !’ cried I, in great astonishment,

‘ Yes,’ said he ; ‘ you have none of them in the east ; but here we have five or six in every street : there never were more *divinities* in Egypt than there are at this time in the town of London. In order therefore to fit them for *that character*, they are made to *throw off human nature* as much as possible in their looks, gestures, words, actions, dress, &c.’--- ‘ But is it not apt to return again ?’ said I. ‘ Yes,’ replied he ; ‘ it returns indeed again, but strangely distorted and deformed. The same thing happens to their *minds* as to their *shapes* ; both are *cramped* by a violent confinement, which makes them swell out in the *wrong place*. You cannot conceive the wild tricks that women play from this habitual perversion of their faculties ; there is not a single quality belonging to them which they do not apply to other purposes than Providence designed it for : hence it is that they are vain of being *cowards*, and *ashamed* of being *modest* : hence they *smile* on the man whom they *dislike*, and *look cold* on him they *love* ; hence they kill every sentiment of their own, and not only *act with the fashion*, but really *think with it*. All this is taught them carefully from their childhood, or else it would be impossible so to conquer their natural dispositions.’

‘ I do not know,’ said I, ‘ what the use is of these instructions ; but it seems to me, that in a country where the women are admitted to a familiar and constant share in every active scene of life, particular care should be taken in their education, to *cultivate their reason*, and *form their hearts*, that they may be equal to the part they have to act. Where great temptations must occur, great virtues are required ; and the *giddy situations* in which they are placed, or love to place themselves,

‘ demand a more than ordinary strength of brain. In Persia a woman has no occasion for any thing but beauty, because of the confinement which she lives under, and therefore that only is attended to : but *here*, methinks, good sense is so very necessary, that it is the business of a lady to improve and adorn her understanding with as much application as the other sex, and, generally speaking, *by methods much the same*.’

LETTER XLVIII.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

I Was this morning with some gentlemen of my acquaintance, who were talking of the attempt that had been made not long ago of setting up a press at Constantinople, and the opposition it had met with from the *Musli*. They applied to me to know what I thought of it, and whether in Persia also it was our religion that deprived us of so useful an art.

I told them, that policy had more part than religion in that affair ; that the press was a very dangerous engine, and the abuses of it made us justly apprehend ill consequences from it.

‘ You are in the right,’ said one of the company, ‘ for this singular reason, *because your government is a despotick one*. But in a free country the press may be very useful, as long as it is under no particular restraint : for it is of great consequence that the people should be informed of every thing that concerns them ; and, without printing, such knowledge could not circulate either so easily or so fast. And to argue against any branch of liberty from the ill use that may be made of it, is to argue against liberty itself, since all is capable of being abused. Nor can any part of freedom be more important, or better worth contending for, than that by which the spirit of it is *preserved, supported, and diffused*. By this appeal to the judgment of the people, we lay some restraint upon those ministers who may have found means to secure themselves from any other *less incorruptible tribunal* ; and sure they have no reason to complain if the publick

‘ exercises a right which cannot be denied without avowing that their conduct will not bear enquiry. For though the best administration may be attacked by calumny, I can hardly believe it would be hurt by it, because I have known a great deal of it employed to very little purpose against gentlemen in opposition to ministers who had nothing to defend them but the force of truth. I do not mean by this to justify any scurrilities upon the *personal characters* either of magistrates or private men, or any *libel properly so called*. Against such abuses of the press the laws have provided a remedy ; and let the laws take their course ; it is for the interest of liberty they should do so, as well as for the security and honour of government : but let them not be strained into oppression by *forced constructions*, or *extraordinary acts of power*, alike repugnant to natural justice, and to the spirit of a free state. Such arbitrary practices no provocation can justify, no precedent warrant, no danger excuse.’

The gentleman who spoke thus was contradicted by another of the company, who, with great warmth, and many arguments, maintained, that the licentiousness of the press was grown of late to such a dangerous height, as to require *extraordinary remedies* ; and that, if it were put under the inspection of some discreet and judicious person, it would be far more beneficial to the publick.

‘ I agree to it,’ answered he, ‘ upon one con-

dition, viz. That there may be likewise an *inspector* for THE PEOPLE, as well as one for the court; but if *nothing* is to be licensed on one side, and *every thing* on the other, it would

be vastly better for us to adopt the eastern policy, and allow *no printing here at all*, than to leave it under *such a partial direction*.'

LETTER XLIX.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

THE same gentleman, who, as I told thee in my last, argued so strongly for the liberty of the press, went on with his discourse in the following manner.

'If we have so much reason to be unwilling, that what we *print* should be under the *inspection* of the court, how much more may we complain of a new power assumed within these last fifty years by all the courts in Europe, of *inspecting private letters*, and invading the *liberty of the press*? The secrecy and safety of correspondence is a point of such consequence to mankind, that the least interruption of it would be criminal, without an evident *necessity*; but that of course, from one year to another, there should be a constant breach of it publicly avowed, is such a violation of the rights of society, as one cannot but wonder at *even in this age*.'

'You may well wonder,' said I to him, 'when I myself am quite amazed to hear of such a thing; the like of which was never practised among *us*, whom you English reproach with being *slaves*. But I beg you to inform me what it was that could induce a free people to give up all the secrets of their business, and private thoughts, to the curi-

osity and discretion of a minister, or his inferior tools in office?'

'They never gave them up,' answered he; 'but those gentlemen have exercised this power by their own authority, under pretence of discovering plots against the state.'---'No doubt,' said one of the company, 'it is a great advantage and ease to the government, to be acquainted at all times with the sentiments of considerable persons, because it is possible they may have some ill intent.'---'It is very true,' replied the other; 'and it might be still a *greater* ease and advantage to the government to have a *licensed spy* in every house, who should report the most private conversations, and let the minister thoroughly into the secrets of every family in the kingdom. This would effectually detect and prevent conspiracies: but would any body come into it on that account?'

'But such in general is the wretched turn of modern policy; the most sacred ties of society are often infringed to promote some present interest, without considering how fatal it may prove in its remote consequences, and how greatly we may want those useful barriers we have so lightly broken down.'

LETTER L.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

I Had lately the pleasure of seeing a sight which filled my mind beyond all the magnificence that our eastern monarchs can shew; I saw a British *fleet* under full sail. Nothing can be imagined more pompous, or more august! The vast size of the ships, and the skill of the sailors, exceed any others now in the universe; nor are they less renowned for their intrepidity.

The whole spectacle gave me the highest ideas of the strength of this nation; a strength not confined to their own coasts, but equally formidable to the most distant parts of the globe.

Were I a king of England, I would never receive an ambassador with any solemnity but in the cabin of a *first-rate man of war*. There is the true seat of his empire; and from *that*

throne he might awe the whole world, if he understood how to exert his *maritime power* in its full strength, and was wise enough to aim at *no other*. But, by an unaccountable mistake in their policy, many kings of England have seemed to forget that their dominions had the advantage of being an *island*: they have been as deeply engaged in the affairs of the *continent* as the most *exposed* of the states there; and neglected the sea, to give all their attention to expensive and ruinous wars undertaken at land. Nay, what is stranger still, they have been fond of *acquisitions* made upon the continent; not considering that all *such acquisitions*, instead of increasing their real strength, are only so many *weak* and *vulnerable* parts, in which they are liable to be hurt by those enemies who could not

possibly hurt them in their natural state, as the sovereigns of a powerful island. Their case is the reverse of that expressed by the poets of Greece in the fable of Antæus. He was (say those poets) *the son of the earth*; and as long as he fought upon her surface, even Hercules, the strongest of heroes, could not overcome him; but being drawn from thence, he was easily vanquished: the English (in the same poetical style) are *the sons of the sea*, and while they *adhere to their mother*, they are invincible; but if they can once be drawn *out of that situation*, their strength forsakes them, and they are not only in danger of being *crushed* by their *enemies*, but may be *hugged to death* even by their *friends*.

LETTER LI.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

I Am returned to this city, from which I have made a long excursion, and am going to give thee an account how I have passed my time. A friend of mine, who lives in a part of England distant from the capital, invited me to spend the summer at his house: my curiosity to see something new, and a natural love to fields and groves at this season of the year, made me glad to accept of his proposal.

The first thing that struck me in leaving London, was to find all the country cultivated like one great garden. This is the genuine effect of that happy liberty which the English enjoy: where property is secure, industry will exert itself; and such is the force of industry, that, without any particular advantages of soil or climate, the lands about this city are of a hundred times greater profit to their owners, than the best-tempered and most fertile spots of Asia to the subjects of the Sophi or the Turk.

Another circumstance, which engaged my attention throughout all my journey, was the vast number of fine seats that adorned the way as I travelled along, and seemed to express a certain *rural greatness* extremely becoming a free people. It looked to me as if men who were possessed of such magnificent retreats were

above depending on a court, and had wisely fixed the scene of their pride and pleasure in the centre of their own estates, where they could really make themselves most considerable. And, indeed, this notion is true in fact; for it has always been the policy of princes that wanted to be absolute, to draw gentlemen away from their country-seats, and place them about a court, as well to deprive them of the popularity which hospitality might acquire, as to render them cold to the interest of the country, and wholly devoted to themselves. Thus we have often been told by our friend Uibec, that the court and capital of France is crowded with nobility, while in the provinces there is scarce a mansion-house that is not falling to ruin; an infallible sign of the decay and downfall of the nobility itself! Those who remember what England was forty years ago, speak with much uneasiness of the change they observe in this particular; and complain, that their countrymen are making haste to copy the French, by abandoning their family seats, and living too constantly in town: but this is not yet sensible to a foreigner.

Thou mayest expect the sequel of my journey in other letters.

H

LETTER LII.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

IT happened when I set out from London, that the parliament, which had sat seven years, was just dissolved, and elections for a new one were carrying on all over England. My first day's stage had nothing in it remarkable, more than what I observed to thee in my last. But when I came to the town where I was to lodge, I found the streets all crowded with men and women, who gave me a lively idea of what I have read of the ancient Bacchanals. Instead of ivy, they carried oaken boughs, were exceeding drunk and mutinous, but at the same time mighty zealous for religion. My Persian habit drew them all about me, and I found they were much puzzled what to make of me. Some said I was a German minister, sent by the court to corrupt the electors; upon which suggestion, I had like to have been torn to pieces: others fancied me a Jesuit; but at last they agreed I was a *mountebank*, and, as such, conducted me to my inn with great respect. When I was safely delivered from this danger, I took a resolution to lay aside my foreign dress, that I might travel with less disturbance; and fell into discourse upon what had passed with a gentleman that accompanied

me in my journey. It seemed to me very strange, that in any affair of so great importance as the choice of a guardian for their liberties, men should drink themselves out of their reason. I asked, whether riots of this kind were common at these times. He answered, that the whole business of the candidates was to pervert and confound the understandings of those that chose them, by all imaginable ways: that from the day they began to make their interest, there was nothing but idleness and debauchery among the common people: the care of their families is neglected; trades and manufactures are at a stand; and such a habit of disorder is brought upon them, that it requires the best part of *seven* years to settle them again. 'And yet,' continued he, 'this evil, great as it is, may be reckoned one of the *least* attending these affairs. Could we bring our electors to content themselves with being made drunk for a year together, we might hope to preserve our constitution; but it is the *sober, considerate corruption*, the cool bargaining for a sale of their liberties, that will be the certain undoing of this nation, whenever a wicked minister shall be the purchaser.'

LETTER LIII.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

THE next day brought us into a county town, where the election for the city and the shire were carrying on together. It was with some difficulty that we made our way through two or three mobs of different parties, that obliged us by turns to declare ourselves for their respective factions. Some of them wore in their hats tobacco leaves, and seemed principally concerned for the honour of that noble plant, which they said had been attacked by the ministry; and in this I heartily joined with them, being myself a great admirer of its virtues, like most of my countrymen. When we came to our inn, I entertained myself with ask-

ing my fellow-traveller questions about elections. The thing was so new to me, that in many points I could not believe him. As for instance, it seems very odd, that a corporation should take such a sudden liking to a man's face, whom they never saw before, or to prefer him to a family that had served them time out of mind: yet this, I was assured, very often happened; and, what was stranger still, on the recommendation of another person, who was no better known to them than himself. My instructor added, that there was in England ONE MAN so extremely popular, though he never affected popularity, that a line from him, accom-

panied with two or three bits of a particular sort of paper, was enough to direct half the nation in the choice of their representatives.

It would be endless to repeat to thee all the tricks which he told me other gentlemen were forced to use, to get themselves elected. One way of being well with a corporation (which a Persian would hardly conceive) is to *kiss* all their *wives*. My companion confessed to me, that he himself had formerly been obliged to go through this laborious solicitation, and had met with some old women in his way, who made him pay dear for their interest. 'But these methods,' said he, 'and other arts of popularity, are growing out of fashion every day. We now court our electors, as we do our mistresses, by sending a notary to them with a proposal; if they like the settlement, it is no matter how they like the man that makes it; but if we disagree about *that*, other pretensions are of very little use. And to make the comparison the juster, the members thus chosen have no more regard to their venal constituents, than husbands so married to their wives.' I asked, if they had no laws against corruption. 'Yes,' said he, 'very strong ones; but corruption is stronger than

the laws. If the magistrates in Persia were to sell wine, it would signify very little that your law forbids the drinking it. How is it possible,' said I, 'to bribe a whole nation to the undoing itself?' 'It is not possible,' answered he; 'but the misfortune of our government is, that the majority of the representative body is chosen, not by the whole nation, but by a *small* and *very mean part* of it. There are a number of boroughs, which have at present no other trade than *sending members to parliament*, and whose inhabitants think the right of *selling themselves and their country* the only valuable privilege of Englishmen. Time has produced this evil, which was quite unforeseen in the original frame of our constitution; and time alone can furnish occasions and means of applying an adequate remedy. Before it can be thoroughly cured, one of two very unlikely things must come to pass: either a court must be so disinterested as to exert all its power for the redressing an evil advantageous to itself; or a popular party, so strong as to give laws to the court, must have virtue enough to venture *disgusting the people*, as well as *offending the crown*, for the sake of *reforming the CONSTITUTION*.'

LETTER LIV.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

ON the third day our travels were at an end, and I arrived at my friend's house with all the pleasure which we receive from retirement and repose, after a life of tumult and fatigue. I was as weary of elections as if I had been a candidate myself, and could not help expressing my surprize that the general disorder on these occasions had not brought some fatal mischief upon the nation. 'That we are not undone by it, replied my friend, 'is entirely owing to the happy circumstance of our being an island. Were we seated on the continent, every election of a new parliament would infallibly draw on an invasion.'---'It is not only from enemies abroad that you are in danger,' answered I; 'one would think that the violence of domestick feuds should of itself overturn your constitution, as it has so

many others; and how you have been able to escape so long, is the wonder of all who have been bred under absolute monarchies; for they are taught, that the superior advantage of their form of government consists in the strength of union; and that in other states, where power is more divided, a pernicious confusion must ensue.'---'They argue rightly enough,' said the gentleman who came along with me; 'but they carry the argument too far. No doubt, factions are the natural inconveniencies of all free governments, as oppression is too apt to attend on arbitrary power. But the difference lies here, that in an absolute monarchy, a tyrant has nothing to restrain him; whereas parties are not only a controul on those that govern, but on each other; nay, they are even a controul upon

' *themselves*, as the leaders of them dare not
 ' give a loose to their own particular passions
 ' and designs, for fear of hurting their credit
 ' with those whom it is their interest to manage
 ' and please. Besides, that it is easier to infect
 ' a prince with a spirit of tyranny, than a na-
 ' tion with a spirit of faction; and where the
 ' discontent is not general, the mischief will be
 ' light. To engage a whole people in a revolt,
 ' the highest provocations must be given; in
 ' such a case, the disorder is not chargeable on
 ' those that defend their liberties, but on the
 ' aggressor that invades them. Parties in soci-
 ' ety are like tempests in the natural world;
 ' they cause, indeed, a very great disturbance;
 ' and, when violent, tear up every thing that
 ' opposes them; but then they purge away
 ' many noxious qualities, and prevent a stag-
 ' nation which would be fatal. All nations
 ' that live in a quiet slavery may be properly
 ' said to stagnate; and happy would it be for
 ' them, if they were roused and put in motion
 ' by that spirit of faction they dread so much;
 ' for, let the consequences of resistance be what
 ' they would, they can produce nothing worse
 ' than a confirmed and established servitude:
 ' but, generally, such a ferment in a nation
 ' throws off what is most oppressive to it, and
 ' settles by degrees into a better and more eli-
 ' gible state. Of this we have received abun-
 ' dant proof; for there is hardly a privilege
 ' belonging to us which has not been gained
 ' by popular discontent, and preserved by fre-
 ' quent opposition. I may add, that we have
 ' known many instances, where parties, though
 ' ever so enflamed against each other, have unit-
 ' ed, from a sense of common danger, and join-
 ' ed in securing their common happiness. And
 ' this is more easily done, when the points that
 ' were once the great subjects of heat and divi-
 ' sion are either worn out by time, or changed
 ' by the clearer and more temperate medium
 ' through which they are seen: for in that case,
 ' parties, which thought that they stood at a
 ' very great distance from one another, may
 ' find themselves brought very near; and the
 ' only *separation* remaining would be the *essen-*
 ' *tial* and *everlasting* one, between *honest men*
 ' and *knaves*, *wise men* and *fools*. That this
 ' may happen, experience shews; and this, I
 ' think, ought to free us from the reproach of
 ' sacrificing our country to our divisions; and
 ' make those despair of success, that *hope by*
 ' *dividing to destroy us.*'

LETTER LV.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

FOR the first month of my being in the
 country, we did nothing from morning
 till night, but dispute about the government.
 The natural beauties round about us were lit-
 tle attended to, so much were we taken up with
 our enquiries into political defects. My two
 companions disagreed in many points; though
 I am persuaded they both meant the same thing,
 and were almost equally good subjects and good
 citizens. I sometimes fancied, that I had
 learned a great deal in these debates; but when
 I came to put my learning together, I found
 myself not much wiser than before. The mas-
 ter of the house was inclined to the side of the
 court, not from any interested or ambitious
 views, but, as he said, from a principle of
whiggism: this word is one of those distinctions
 which, for little less than a century, have di-

vided and perplexed this nation. The opposite
 party are called *tories*. They have as strong an
 antipathy to each other, as the followers of
 Hali to those of Osman. I desired my friend
 to give me some certain mark by which I might
 know one from the other. 'The *whigs*,' said
 he, 'are they that are *now in place*, and the
 ' *tories* are they that are *out*.'—'I understand
 ' you,' returned I; 'the difference is only
 ' *there*; so that if they who are now *tories*,
 ' were *employed*, they would instantly become
 ' *whigs*, and if the *whigs* were removed, they
 ' would be *tories*.'—'Not so,' answered he
 ' with some warmth; 'there is a great difference
 ' in their principles and their conduct.'—
 ' Ay,' said I, 'let me hear that, and then I
 ' shall be able to chuse my party.'—'The *to-*
 ' *ries*,' said he, 'are for *advancing the power*'

‘ of the *crown*, and making the *clergy* the tools
 ‘ of their ambition. When they were in pow-
 ‘ er, they *weakened* our ancient allies, *dis-*
 ‘ *graced* our *arms*, *hurt* our *trade*, *lost* our *ho-*
 ‘ *nour*, and were *assistant* to the greatness of
 ‘ France.’

‘ You surprize me !’ replied I ; ‘ for I have
 ‘ heard *all this* imputed to *some*, who you as-
 ‘ sure me are *good whigs* ; nay the very *pillars* of
 ‘ *whiggism*.’

‘ I will explain that matter to you immedi-
 ‘ ately,’ said the gentleman that came down
 with me. ‘ Whiggism is an *indelible charac-*
 ‘ *ter*, like *episcopacy* : for as he who has once
 ‘ been a *bishop*, though he no longer perform
 ‘ any of the offices and duties of his function,
 ‘ *is a bishop* nevertheless ; so he who has once
 ‘ been a whig, let him act ever so contrary to
 ‘ his principles, *is nevertheless a whig* ; and as
 ‘ all true churchmen are obliged in conscience

‘ to *acknowledge* the first, so all true whigs are
 ‘ in duty bound to *support* the last.’

‘ Very well,’ said I ; ‘ but are there none
 ‘ who differ from this *orthodox belief* ?’—‘ Yes,’
 said he, ‘ *certain obstinate people* ; but, like other
 ‘ *dissenters*, they are banished for *their separa-*
 ‘ *tion*, by being excluded from *all places of trust*
 ‘ *and profit*.’

‘ A heavy punishment indeed !’ answered I,
 ‘ and not more likely to *diminish the sect* than
 ‘ any other kind of persecution. But if you
 ‘ will allow a stranger to give any advice in
 ‘ your affairs, I think you should pull down at
 ‘ once these *ensigns of party*, which are, indeed,
 ‘ *false colours* hung out by *faction* ; and set up,
 ‘ instead of them, *one national standard*, which
 ‘ all who leave, by whatever name they may
 ‘ call themselves, should be considered and used
 ‘ as *deserters*.’

LETTER LVI.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

I Went with my country friend, some days
 ago, to make a visit in a neighbouring
 county, to the prelate of that diocese. His
 character is so extraordinary, that not to give
 it to thee, would be departing from the rule I
 have laid down, to let nothing that is *singular*
 escape my notice. In the first place, he *resides*
 constantly on his diocese, and has done so for
 many years : he asks nothing of the court for
 himself or family ; he hoards up no wealth for
 his relations ; but lays out the revenues of his
 see in a decent hospitality, and a charity void
 of ostentation. At his first entrance into the
 world, he distinguished himself by a zeal for the
 liberty of his country, and had a considerable
 share in bringing on the Revolution that pre-
 served it. His principles never altered by his
 preferment : he never prostituted his pen, nor
 debased his character, by party disputes or blind
 compliance. Though he is warmly serious in

the belief of his religion, he is moderate to all
 who differ from him : he knows no distinction
 of party, but extends his good offices alike to
 whig and tory ; a friend to virtue under any
 denomination ; an enemy to vice under any co-
 lours. His health and old age are the effects of
 a temperate life and a quiet conscience : though
 he is now some years above fourscore, nobody
 ever thought he lived too long, unless it was
 out of an impatience to *succeed him*.

This excellent person entertained me with
 the greatest humanity, and seemed to take a
 particular delight in being useful and instruc-
 tive to a stranger. To tell thee the truth,
 Mirza, I was so affected with the piety and vir-
 tue of this teacher * ; the Christian religion
 appeared to me so amiable in his character and
 manners, that, if the force of education had
 not rooted Mahometism in my heart, he would
 certainly have made a convert of me.

* The translator supposes that the author means Dr. John Hough, Bishop of Worcester.
 [This venerable prelate died March 8, 1743, aged ninety-three ; having been a bishop
 almost fifty-three years.]

LETTER LVII.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

MY long stay in the country gave me leisure to read a good deal : I applied myself to history, particularly that of England ; for rightly to understand what a nation *is*, one should previously learn what it *has been*. If I complained of the different accounts which are given by the English of themselves in their present circumstances, I have no less reason to complain of their historians : past transactions are so variously related, and with such a mixture of prejudice on both sides, that it is as hard to know truth from their relations, as religion from the comments of divines. The great article in which they differ most, is the ancient power of the crown, and that of the parliament : according to some, the latter is no more than an encroachment on the former ; but, according to others, it is as old as the monarchy itself.

This point is debated with great warmth, and a multitude of proofs alledged by either party : yet the importance of the controversy is not so great as some may conceive it. For many hundred years, the point is out of dispute ; but suppose it was otherwise, would it follow from thence, that the parliamentary powers are usurpations ? No, Mirza, no ; if liberty were but a year old, the English would have just as good a right to claim and to preserve it, as if it had been handed down to them from many ages ; for, allowing that their ancestors were slaves through weakness or want of spirit, is *slavery so valuable an inheritance,*

that it never must be parted with ? Is a long prescription necessary to give force to the natural rights of mankind ? If the privileges of the people of England be *concessions* from the crown, is not the power of the crown itself a *concession* from the people ? However, it must be confessed, that though a long possession of absolute power can give no right to continue it against the natural claim of the people in behalf of their liberties, whenever that claim shall be made ; yet a long possession of freedom serves to establish and strengthen original right, or, at least, makes it more shameful to give it up. I will therefore sketch out to thee, as short as I can, in my next letters, the result of what I have read, and what I have thought on this subject, not with the minute exactness of a political critick, who of all criticks would tire thee most ; but by such a general view of the several changes this government has undergone, as may set the true state of it pretty clearly before thee. Further than this it would be almost impossible for a stranger to go upon that subject, or for one so distant as thou art either to receive or desire information : nor, indeed, were it more feasible, should I think it of use to engage in a much larger detail. It is with enquiries into the constitutions of nations, as with enquiries into the constitution of the universe ; those who are most nicely curious about particular and trifling parts, are often those who see least of the whole.

LETTER LVIII.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

IT has been an usual piece of vanity in the writers of every nation, to represent the original constitutions of their respective states as founded on deep-laid systems and plans of policy, in which they imagine that they discover the utmost refinements of human wisdom; whereas, in truth, they are often the effects of downright chance, and produced by the force of certain circumstances, or the simple dictates of nature itself, out of a regard to some present expediency, and with little providence to the future.

Such was the original of the celebrated Gothick government, that was formerly spread all over Europe. It was produced, not in a cabinet, but a camp; and owes much less to the prudence of a legislator, than to the necessity of the times which gave it birth.

The people that introduced it into Britain, and every where else, were a multitude of soldiers, unacquainted with any thing but war: their leader, for the better carrying it on, was invested with a sort of regal power; and when it happened that the war continued long, he acquired a prescriptive authority over those who had been accustomed to obey his orders; but this authority was directed by the advice of the other officers, and dependant on the good liking of the army, from which alone it was derived: in like manner, the first revenues of this leader were nothing more than a title to a larger share in the common booty, or the voluntary contributions of the soldiers out of the wealth acquired under his command: but had he attempted to take a horse or cow, or any part of the plunder, from the meanest soldier, without his free consent, a mutiny would certainly have ensued, and the violation of property been revenged. From these principles, we may naturally draw the whole form of the Saxon or Gothick government. When these invaders became masters of kingdoms, and not only ravaged them, but settled there, the general

was changed into a king, the officers into nobles, the council of war into a council of state, and the body of the soldiery itself into a general assembly of all the freemen. A principal share of the conquests, as it had been of the spoils, was freely allotted to the prince, and the rest by him distributed according to rank and merit among his troops and followers, under certain conditions agreeable to the Saxon customs. Hence the different tenures, and the services founded upon them; hence the vassalage, or rather servitude, of the conquered, who were obliged to till the lands which they had lost, for the conquerors who had gained them, or at best to hold them of those new proprietors on such hard and slavish terms as they thought fit to impose. Hence likewise the riches of the clergy, and their early authority in the state: for those people, being ignorant and superstitious in the same degree, and heated with the zeal of a new conversion, thought they could not do too much for their teachers, but, with a considerable share of the conquered lands, admitted them to a large participation of dominion itself. Thus, without any settled design, or speculative skill, this constitution in a manner formed itself; and it was *the better* for that reason, as there was more of nature in it, and little of *political mystery*, which wherever it prevails, is the bane of publick good. A government so established could admit of no pretence of a *power* in the king *transcendent to law*, or an *unalterable right* in the succession. It could never come into the heads of such a people, that they were to submit to a *tyranny* for *conscience sake*; or, that their liberties were not every way as *sacred* as the prerogative of their prince. They could never be brought to understand, that there was such a thing as *reason of state* distinct from the common reason of mankind; much less would they allow pernicious measures to pass unquestioned, or unpunished, under the ridiculous sanction of that name.

LETTER LIX.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

I Gave thee in my last a short account of the first rise and construction of the Saxon government, on very plain and simple foundations. It was, perhaps, the *most free* of all the limited monarchies that have been known in the world. The nobles and people had such a share in the legislature, and such a weight in the government, that the king could do nothing but with their assistance, and by their advice. He could not oppress them by force, because they were *armed* and he *was not*, unless when they employed *their arms* in his service for the defence of the kingdom. He could not corrupt them; for all offices of power or judicature were then *elective*, the estate of the crown was held *unalienable*, and only sufficed to maintain the expence of the royal household and civil government. No causes were tried but by juries, even in spiritual matters; so that the lives and properties of the people could not be touched *without their own co-operation*, either by the king, the nobles, or clergy. To all this was joined the best *police* that any nation ever enjoyed, except the Chinese, among whom many of the same regulations have been established with a *conformity* very *surprizing*, as it is certain that neither copied the other. Such was the Saxon constitution, when by the wisdom and virtue of two or three great kings it had received its final perfection. The only essential defect of it was, the *excessive immunities* granted to churchmen, which made them too independent upon the civil authority, and very burthensome to the state. This form of government continued unaltered in its principal parts, till the Norman invasion, which, like a foreign weight roughly laid upon the springs, disturbed and obstructed its proper motions: yet, by

degrees, it recovered itself again; and, how ill soever the Saxon *people* might be treated, under the notion of a *conquest*, the Saxon *constitution* was never wholly subdued. The new comers relished slavery no better than the old inhabitants; and gladly joined with them, upon a sense of mutual interest, to force a confirmation of their freedom and the ancient laws. Indeed, there was so great a conformity between the government of Normandy and that of England, the customs of both nations were so much the same, that, unless the Normans by conquering this island had lost their original rights, and fought on purpose to degrade themselves and their posterity, it was impossible their kings could have a right to absolute power. So far was that nation from owning any such right, that, in conjunction with the English, they demanded and obtained of their kings *charters* declaring their liberties, not as *grants* derived from the *favour*, or *innovations* forced from the *weakness*, but as *acknowledgments* due from the *justice, of the crown*. As such the best and greatest princes considered those charters; as such they confirmed and observed them: and when they were disputed, or broken by others of a different character, civil wars ensued, which ended to the disadvantage of the crown. But the misfortune was, that, in all these struggles, the *bishops* and *nobles treated for the people*, not the people *for themselves*; and therefore their interests were much neglected, and the advantages gained from the king were much more beneficial to the church and nobility than to those who were under their patronage.

I will say more on this head when I write next.

LETTER LX.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

THOU wilt be surprized to hear that the period when the English nation enjoyed the greatest happiness, after the Norman invasion, was under the influence of *a woman*. As much as we Persians should despise a female ruler, it was not till the reign of Queen Elizabeth, that the government came to *an equal balance*, which is its true state of perfection.

Though the commons of England had regained by *degrees*, and in a *different shape*, that share of the legislature, which was in a great measure lost by them under the first Norman kings, yet their power was not so great as it had been in the Saxon witenagemote, or general assembly, nor their condition so happy in many respects; for the chief strength of the government resided in the great lords and the clergy, who supremely directed all publick affairs. The proceedings of the commons could not be free in their *representative body*, while in their *collective body* they were weak and oppressed. The laws of vassalage, the authority of the church, the poverty and dependancy in which they lived, hung heavy upon them; so that they were obliged to act in subserviency to the nobles and bishops, even when they shewed most vigour against the crown, following the passions of both upon many occasions in the parliament and in the field, and making or unmaking kings as *these their immediate masters* desired. But, in return for their services, they often obtained a redress of their grievances, revenged themselves upon bad ministers, and obtained good laws for the commonwealth. To whatever purposes their strength might be used, though to the purposes of faction, *by being used it increased*. The crown at last *itself* assisted the growth of it, in opposition to that of the church and the nobility. The bonds of vassalage were broken or lightened; the barons were by different laws encouraged and enabled to part with their lands; the weight of property was transferred to the side of the people. Many accidents concurred to the same effect. A reformation in religion was begun, by which that mighty fabrick of church power, erected on the ruins of publick liberty,

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and adorned with the spoils of the crown itself, was happily attacked and overturned. A great part of the immense possessions of the clergy was taken away, and most of it sold to the commons upon easy terms. They had now a very considerable share of the lands of England, and a still greater treasure in their commerce, which they were beginning to extend and improve. Their riches secured their independency; the clergy feared them, and the nobles could not hurt them. In this state Queen Elizabeth found *the parliament*: the lords and commons were nigh upon a level, and the church in a decent subordination. She was the head of this well-proportioned body, and supremely directed all its motions. Thus, what in mixed forms of government seldom happens, there was no contest for power in the legislature; because no part was so high as to be uncontrouled, or so low as to be oppressed. A reformation of religion was compleatly established by this excellent princess; which entirely rescued the nation from that *foreign yoke* the pope had imposed upon it for so many centuries, and from the dominion of superstition, *the worst of all slavery*. The next great benefits that she conferred upon her subjects, were the extension of commerce into all parts of the world, and the foundation of their *maritime power*, which is *their true, natural greatness*. Under her it began; and she lived to carry it to such a height, as to make them really *lords of the sea*, an empire more glorious than that of the Sophi our master, and *richer* than that of the Mogul. In doing this, she did more for England than her greatest predecessors had ever done; far more than those who conquered France, though they could have secured it to their posterity. These were the *arts* by which she ruled, and by these she was able to preserve her authority; nay, and to extend it further upon certain occasions than very absolute princes could do, even while she assisted her people in the corroborating and confirming their liberty. The strength of *her power* was *their satisfaction*; and every other happiness followed *that*, as every misfortune and disgrace is sure to attend on their discontent.

I

LETTER LXI.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

I Ended my last letter with the felicity of Elizabeth's reign. Very different was that of her successor James the First: for his character and conduct were the reverse of her's. He endeavoured to break the balance of government, by her so wisely fixed; and wanted to be *greater* than *her*, without one quality that could render him capable of filling her place. He had neither courage, ability, nor address: he was contemned both at home and abroad; his very favourites did not love him, though he was governed by them in every thing; nor did they maintain their dominion by his affections so much as by his fears. Yet this *meanest of kings* made great advances towards *absolute power*; and would have compleatly obtained it, if he could have found means to have introduced the *same luxury* into the *nation* as he did into the *court*, with, the constant attendant of luxury, the *same corruption*. But the virtue infused by Elizabeth into the mass of the people, and the indigence of the crown, stopt the contagion from spreading so far: the commons resisted it, though the lords and the bishops did not; and some check was given to the designs of the king, yet not enough for the securing of liberty, or preventing the evils *his conduct* prepared for the following reign. The clergy, whom he attached to his interests by favouring theirs, or what they took to be theirs, more than a *wise* prince *would*, or a *good* prince *ought* to have done, were very assistant to him, by preaching notions which he and they seem to have borrowed from *our religion*, of a right divine in kings, neither derived from human laws, nor to be limited by them; and other such Mahometan tenets, that had never been heard of before in this country: yet there weremany who disliked these innovations, and their opposition hindered them from taking deep root in any minds but those of the royal family. These obstinate protestants and patriots were branded with the name of Puritans, and much hated by James, and Charles his son, who, upon the decease of the former, succeeded to his kingdoms, his notions and his designs.

He had many better qualifications than his

father, but as wrong a judgment, and greater obstinacy. He carried his affection for the clergy and abhorrence of the Puritans, to an excess of bigotry and rage. He agreed so ill with his parliaments, that he soon grew weary of them, and resolved to be troubled with no more; none were called for twelve years together, and all that time he governed as despotically as the Sophi of Persia. The laws were either openly infringed, or explained in the manner he directed: he levied money upon his subjects against privileges expressly confirmed by himself. In short, his passion for power might have been fully gratified, if his more prevailing one to bigotry had not engaged him in a senseless undertaking, of forcing the same form of worship upon his subjects in Scotland, as he had declared himself so warmly for in England. It is safer to attack men in their civil rights, than their religious opinions: the Scots, who had acquiesced under tyranny, took up arms against persecution. Their insurrection made it necessary to call a parliament; it met, but was instantly dissolved by the intemperate folly of the court. All hopes of better measures were put an end to by this last provocation. The Scots marched into England, and were received by the English, not as enemies, but as brothers and allies: the king, unable to oppose them, was compelled to ask the aid of another parliament. A parliament met, exasperated with the oppressions of fifteen years: the principal members were men of the greatest capacity, courage, and virtue, firmly united among themselves, and whom the court could neither *corrupt* nor *intimidate*. They resolved to make use of the opportunity, to *redress* their *grievances*, and *secure* their *liberty*; the king granted every thing that was necessary to either of those ends, except such *securities* as might have been turned *against himself*: but what perhaps, was really *concession*, had the appearance of *constraint*, and therefore gained neither *gratitude* nor *confidence*. The nation could no longer trust the king, and the *particular men* could not trust the king's *part* of those

particular men was become a *national concern*: they had exposed themselves by serving the publick; the publick therefore judged that it was bound in justice to defend them. Nor indeed was it possible, when the work of reformation was begun, after so long a denial of justice, to keep a people, fore with the remembrance of injuries received and satisfaction refused, within the bounds of a proper moderation. Such a sobriety is much easier in speculation than it ever was in practice. Thus, partly for the safety of their leaders, and partly from a jealousy of his intentions too justly conceived, the parliament drew the sword against the king: but the sword, when drawn, was no longer theirs; it was quickly turned against them by those to whose hands they trusted it: the honestest and wisest of both parties were outwitted and overpowered by villains; the king perished, and the constitution perished with him.

A private man, whose genius was called forth by the troubles of his country, and formed in the exercise of faction, usurped the government. His character was as extraordinary as his fortune: he had an air of enthusiasm, which gained all those who were real enthusiasts, (the number of whom was great in those days) and put him at their head. That he was one himself in some degree may be supposed, notwithstanding the prudence with which he conducted all his designs; because the same spark of enthusiasm which makes common men *mad*, may, in certain conjunctures, only capacitate others of superior abilities to undertake and perform *extraordinary things*. Whether Cromwell was one of these, or acted entirely from political cunning, the times he lived in could not discover; and much less can the present. Thus far is certain, that, by an uncommon appearance of zeal, by great address, and great valour, he first *enflamed* the spirit of liberty into *extravagance*, and afterwards duped and awed it into *submission*. He trampled on the laws of the nation, but he raised the glory of it; and it is hard to say which he deserved most, a *halter* or a *crown*.

If the enthusiasts of his own party would have permitted him to have taken the title of king as well as the power, it is probable the royalty

might have been fixed in his family by a well-modelled and lasting establishment. He shewed a great desire to carry that point; and I have heard him compared in this instance to Julius Cæsar, a great Roman general, who, like him, having mastered his country by its own arms, and being possessed of more than the *power of a king*, was so fond of adding the *name* to it, that it cost him his life. But the two cases were totally different. What in the Roman was a weak vanity, and below the rest of his character, was in the Englishman solid good sense. The one could not take the name without destroying *the forms of the Roman constitution*; the other could not preserve *the forms of the English constitution* without taking that name. He therefore did wisely in seeking it; but not being able to bring his own friends to consent to it, or to do it against their opposition, he could make no settlement of the government to out-last his own life: for it is hardly possible, from the nature of things, that a dominion newly acquired should long be maintained in any country, if the ancient forms and names are not kept up. Immediately after the death of this great man, all order was lost in the state: various tyrannies were set up, and destroyed each other; but all shewed a *republick to be impracticable*. At last the nation, growing weary of such wild confusion, agreed to recal the banished son of their murdered king, not for *his sake*, but for *the sake of the monarchy*, which all the nation desired to *restore*; and so inconsiderate was the zeal of those times, that they restored it without any limitations, or any conditions made for the publick. Thus the fruits of a tedious civil war were lightly and carelessly thrown away by too hasty a passion for repose. The constitution revived indeed again, but revived *as sickly as before*: the ill humours, which ought to have been purged away by the violent remedies that had been used, continued as prevalent as ever, and naturally broke out in the same distempers. The king wanted to set himself above the law; wicked men encouraged this disposition; and many good men were weak enough to comply with it, out of aversion to those principles of resistance which they had seen so fatally abused.

LETTER LXII.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

THE methods pursued by Charles the Second, in the conduct of his government, were in many respects different from his father's, though the purpose of both was much the same. The father always *bullied* his parliaments; the son endeavoured to *corrupt* them: the father obstinately refused to change his ministers, because he really esteemed them as honest men; the son very easily changed *his*, because he thought they were all *alike* dishonest, and that his designs might as well be carried on by one *knave* as by another: the father was a tool of the clergy, and a persecutor, out of zeal for his religion; the son was almost indifferent to religion, but served the passions of his clergy against the dissenters from motives of policy: the father desired to be absolute at home, but to make the nation respectable abroad; the son assisted the King of France in his invasions on the liberties of Europe, that, by his help, he might master those of England; nay, he was even a pensioner of France, and, by so vile a prostitution of his dignity, set an example to the nobility of his realm, to sell *their honour likewise for a pension*; an example, the ill effects of which have been felt too sensibly ever since.

Yet, with all these vices and imperfections in the character of Charles the Second, there was something so bewitching in his behaviour, that the charms of it prevailed on many to connive at the faults of his government: and, indeed, nothing can be so hurtful to a country, which has liberties to defend, as a prince who knows how at the same time to make himself *despotick and agreeable*: this was eminently the talent of Charles the Second; and what is most surprizing, he possessed it without any great depth of understanding.

But the principal instrument of his bad intentions, was a general depravity of manners, with which he took pains to infect his court, and they the nation. All virtues, both publick and private, were openly ridiculed; and none were allowed to have any talents for wit or business, who pretended to any sense of honour, or regard to decency.

The king made great use of these new notions; and they proved very pernicious to the freedom, as well as morals, of his subjects: but an indolence, natural to his temper, was some check to his designs; and, fond as he was of arbitrary power, he did not pursue it any farther than was consistent with his *pleasure and repose*.

His brother, who bore a great sway in his government, had changed his religion abroad, as the king himself had also done: but with this difference, that the latter retained almost as little of that which he embraced, as of that which he forsook; whereas the former was a bigot to popery, and known to be such, while the change of the king was a secret to most of his subjects. The fear of a *popish successor* raised great discontent, and great disorders in the nation: the House of Commons passed a bill for excluding that prince from the crown, founded undoubtedly in justice and reason; but the firmness of the king *in that single point*, the complaisance of the lords, the jealousy the church entertained of the dissenters, the scruples of those who thought hereditary right *divine and indefeasible*, and, above all, the fear of being involved in a new civil war, which alarmed many well-meaning people, from a mixture of *faction* that had discovered itself in some of *the characters*, and in some of *the measures*, by which the national cause was then carried on, frustrated the attempt *to change the succession*, as the obstinacy of those engaged in that attempt did all expedients to *limit the successor*. The unhappy advantages all this gave to the king made him a great deal more absolute in the last years of his reign than in all the foregoing ones; and, upon his demise, brought his brother in *peace and triumph* to the throne. He had not been long seated there, before he convinced the most attached to his party, that the apprehensions conceived of him, and the design of excluding him, had been too just. All that the spirit of bigotry could add to a temper in itself *harsh and violent*, appeared in his government: all that *a weak understanding, madly conducted*, could undertake, was under-

taken : arbitrary power was the means used, and the end designed was a change of religion. Happy was it for England that this end so plainly declared itself : it roused even those whom no danger to *liberty* could have ever alarmed, and taught the preachers of *non-resistance to resist*. A revolution was evidently necessary to save the whole, and that necessity produced one.

King James the Second lost his crown, and the nation gave it to their deliverer the Prince of Orange : the government was settled on a firmer foundation, agreeable to the ancient Saxon principles from which it had declined ; and, by a *happiness* peculiar to itself, grew stronger from the *shocks* it had sustained.

LETTER LXIII.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

THE first advantage gained by the English nation, in the change of their government, was the utter extinction of those vain and empty phantoms of *hereditary indefeasible right*, and a power *superior to law*, which King James the First had conjured up, to the great disturbance and terror of his people.

With James the Second they were expelled ; nor can they ever be brought back again with prospect of success, but by *that family* alone, which *claims from him* : for which reason, it will eternally be the interest of the people of England, not to suffer such a *claim* to prevail ; but to maintain an establishment, which is founded on the basis of their liberty, and from which their liberty cannot be separated unless the rights of both are destroyed.

As the parliament plainly disposed of the crown in altering the succession, the princes who have reigned since that time could pretend to none but a *parliamentary title* ; and the same force as the legislature could give to that, it also gave to the privileges of the subject.

The word *loyalty*, which had long been misapplied, recovered its original and proper sense : it was now understood to mean no more than a due obedience to the authority of the king, in conformity to the laws ; instead of a bigotted compliance to the will of the king, in opposition to the laws.

How great an advantage this would be, will appear, by reflecting on the mischiefs that have been brought upon *this country* in particular, from the wrong interpretation of *certain names*. But this is not the only benefit that ensued from

that happy revolution. The prerogative of the crown had been till then so ill defined, that the full extent of it was rather stopped by the degree of *prudence* in the government, or of *impatience* in the people, than by the letter of the law : nay, it seemed as if in many instances the law allowed a power to the king, entirely destructive to itself. Thus princes had been often made to believe, that what their subjects complained of as oppression, was a legal exercise of the rights of the crown : and no wonder if, in disputable points, they decided the question in favour of their own authority.

But now the bounds of prerogative were marked out by express restrictions ; the course of it became regular and fixed ; and could no longer move obliquely, to the danger of the general system.

Let me also observe to thee, that whereas before, *to govern by parliaments* was the policy only of good and wise princes ; after this period, it may be considered in a different light, because all expedients of *governing otherwise* are plainly impracticable, and it may not always imply *a conforming the government to the sense of the people*. I will explain this to thee more distinctly when I write again. In the mean while, let me a little recal thy thoughts from past events, and the *history of England*, to the remembrance and love of thy faithful Selim, who is not become so much an Englishman as to forget his native Persia ; but perpetually sighs for his friends and country, amidst all that engages his attention in a foreign land.

LETTER LXIV.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

THE ancient revenues of the kings of England consisted chiefly in a large demesne of lands, and certain rights and powers reserved to them over the lands held of the crown; by means of which, they supported the royal dignity without the immediate assistance of the people, except upon extraordinary occasions. But, in process of time, the extravagance of princes and the rapaciousness of favourites having wasted the best part of this estate, and their successors endeavouring to repair it by a tyrannical abuse of those rights and powers, some of them which were found to be most grievous, were bought off by the parliament, with a fixed establishment for the maintenance of the household, composed of certain taxes yearly raised, and appropriated thereto.

But, after the *expulsion of the Stuarts*, the expence of the government being augmented for the defence of the succession, the crown was constrained to apply to parliament, not only for the maintenance of its household, which was settled at the beginning of every reign, and in

every reign *considerably increased*; not only for extraordinary supplies, to which end parliaments anciently were called; but for the ordinary service of the year.

Thus a continual dependance on the people became necessary to kings; and they were so truly the *servants* of the publick, that they received the *wages* of it in form, and were obliged to the parliament for the means of exercising the royalty, as well as for the right they had to claim it. Nor can this salutary dependance ever cease, except the parliament itself should give it up, by empowering the king to raise money, without *limiting the sum*, or *specifying the services*. Such concessions are absurd in their own nature; for if a prince is afraid to trust his people with a power of supplying his necessities, upon a thorough knowledge of them, the people have no encouragement to trust their prince, or, to speak more properly, his minister, with so blind and undetermined an authority.

LETTER LXV.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

YOU have seen in my last, that, from the time of King James's expulsion, annual meetings of parliament were become necessary to the carrying on of the government. But that the representatives of the people, from too long a delegation of their authority, might not forget *by whom*, and *for what*, it was given them; and that the people might be enabled to correct a *bad choice*, which experience should prove to be such; it was thought expedient not long after to pass a law for the chusing a *new parliament* at the end of every *three years*. This term has been since prolonged to *seven*, I think, for very good reasons; because the country interest could not support the redoubled expence of contesting with court-corruption so much oftener than now, and there are no good grounds

to suppose that the efforts on that side would be much less for a triennial than a septennial parliament, a majority in *that* being equally necessary to a court as in *this*: so that the attacks would be the same, or near the same, and the resistance much weaker on the side of the people. If then the good proposed by shortening the term be very uncertain, it must be considered that very great and certain evils attend upon frequent elections, viz. the enflaming of party divisions, depraving the morals of the people, and many other inconveniences of no little weight. However, this is a point about which I have found the best men differ, and which thou wilt therefore consider as more problematical than others I have mentioned before. I now return to my history.

Among other advantages gained to liberty a *this its happy restoration*, a free exercise of their religion was allowed to those who differ from the rites of the English church; which has been continued and secured to them ever since, with some short interruption, which even the *party* that caused them is now *ashamed of*. Nor has any thing contributed more than this to the peace and happiness of the government, by gaining it the affection of all its subjects, and taking from the spirit of faction a pretence, and a strength, of which it has often made a very bad use.

I must also observe to thee, that from this period a different temper has shewn itself in the *clergy* of England. They are become better friends to liberty, better subjects, better Englishmen, than they had usually been either before or since the Reformation. Some among them have written a defence of the religious and civil rights of mankind, with as free a spirit, and as much force of learning and argument, as any layman has ever done; a merit peculiar to themselves, and *to which no other clergy in the whole world can pretend*. The generality of them are now very moderate, and *useful members of the commonwealth*, in due submission to the civil authority, and desiring nothing but, what they deserve, the *protection of government in the enjoyment of their just rights*. They who would deny them *that*, are themselves *persecutors, disturbers of government, and very bad members of the commonwealth*.

This succession was facilitated and secured by the union of Scotland with England; and Great Britain became infinitely stronger, by being undivided, entire, and *wholly an island*.

One condition of that union was, the admitting sixteen Scotch peers, chosen by the whole body of the peerage, into the English House of Lords, but upon a tenure very different from the rest, being to sit there only for the duration of the parliament, at the end of which a new election must be made. If those elections are *free and uninfluenced*, this alteration in the English constitution may prove very much

to its advantage, because such a number of independent votes will balance *any part of the House of Peers* over which the court may have obtained too great an influence; but if they should ever be *chosen by corruption*, and have no hopes of *sitting there again* except by an *unconstitutional dependence* on the favour of a court, then such a number added to the *others* would grievously endanger the constitution; and the House of Lords, instead of being, as it ought, a *mediating power* between the crown and the people, would become a sort of *antichamber to the court*, a mere *office for executing and authorizing* the purposes of a *minister*.

I have now, my dear Mirza, traced thee out a general plan of the English constitution: and I believe thou wilt agree with me, upon the whole, *that a better can hardly be contrived*; the only misfortune is, *that so good a one can hardly be preserved*.

The great distinction between the ancient plan of it and that which has taken place since the expulsion of the Stuarts is this, that the first was *less perfect*, but *better secured*, because the nobility and people *had the sword in their hands*; whereas the last is more *regular*, subject to *fewer disorders*, and in the frame of it *more free*, but *ill secured*, the sword being *only in the hands of the king*: to which is added a vast increase of the *wealth* of the crown, and a mighty influence gained to it by the debts of the publick, which have brought on new *taxes*, new *powers* for the raising those taxes, of a very dangerous nature, and a prodigious multiplication of *officers* wholly dependent upon the court; from all which the court has acquired new means of *corruption*, without any new *effectual securities* against that corruption being yet gained on the side of the people. And this sort of power is so much more to be feared than any other, as it cannot be exercised without *depraving the morals*, and *debasing the spirit*, of the whole people; which in the end would not only enslave them, but render their servitude *voluntary, deserved, and remediless*.

LETTER LXVI.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

IN former reigns, when parliaments were laid aside for any length of time, the whole authority of the state was lodged in a privy council, by the advice and direction of which all affairs were carried on. But these counsellors, being *chosen* by the king, and *depending* on his favour, were too apt to advise such things only as they knew would be most agreeable; and thus the interests of the nation were often sacrificed to the profit and expectations of a few particulars. Yet still, as on extraordinary occasions the king might be forced to call a parliament, the fear of it was some check to their proceedings; and a degree of caution was natural to men who foresaw they should sooner or later be called to an account. But let us suppose, that any future prince could wholly *influence the election of a parliament*, and make the members of it *dependent on himself*, what would be the difference between *that parliament* and a privy council? Would it speak the sense of the nation, or of the court? Would the interest of the people be considered in it, or that of their representatives? They would only differ in this respect, that *one*, having no power above it, *might be absolutely free from all restraint*, which, with the terror of a parliament hanging over it, the *other never could*.

This is the only imaginable method, by which the liberty of the English nation can be attacked with any success. But thou wilt ask, To what end should an attack of this nature be made? Why should a king of England go about to destroy a constitution, the maintenance of which would render him both great and happy?

I reply, that a king indeed can have no reasonable inducement to make such an experiment; but a minister may find it necessary for his own support: and happy would it have been for many countries, if the *master's* interest had

been considered by the *servant* half so warmly as the *servant's* by the *master*.

If a man who travels through Italy was to ask, what advantage all the wealth in religious houses, and all the idolatrous worship paid there, are to the saints they are dedicated to; the answer must be, *Of none at all*. But the priests, who are really gainers by them, know that they abuse the people to very good purpose; and make use of a *venerable name*, not from any regard they have to it, but to raise their own greatness, swell their own pride, and *cover* and *secure* their own extortion.

It is only therefore by the weakness of princes, the arts of ministers, and the seduction of the people against their own interests, the constitution of England can perish, and probably will perish at last. This will happen sooner or later, as more or less care is taken by those whose duty it is to watch over it. I am not ignorant that there are some visionary men, who dream of schemes to perpetuate it beyond all possibility of future change: but I have always thought the same of political projects to render a government, as of chemical projects to render a man *immortal*. Such a *grand elixir* cannot be found; and those who would *tamper* with states, in hopes of procuring them that *immortality*, are the most unfit to prescribe to them of all men in the world. But, at the same time that I know this, I also know, that the date of a government may be *prolonged* by proper and salutary remedies, applied by those who understand its true nature, and join to speculative wisdom *experience* and *temper*. Nor should I think it at all a better excuse for assisting to ruin the constitution of my country, that it *must come to an end*, and perhaps *begins to decay*, than for joining in the murder of my father, that he *must die at last*, and *begins to grow old*.

LETTER LXVII.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

THE other morning, a friend of mine came to me, and told me, with the air of one who brings an agreeable piece of news, that there was a lady who most passionately desired the pleasure of my acquaintance, and had commissioned him to carry me to see her. I will not deny to thee, that my vanity was a little flattered with this message: I fancied she had seen me in some publick place, and had taken a liking to my person; not being able to comprehend what other motive could make her send for a man she was a stranger to, in so free and extraordinary a manner. I painted her in my own imagination very young and very handsome, and set out, with most pleasing expectations, to see the conquest I had made: but when I arrived at the place of assignation, I found a little old woman, very dirty, encircled by four or five strange fellows, one of whom had a paper in his hand, which he was reading to her with all the emphasis of an author.

My coming in obliged him to break off, which put him a good deal out of humour; but the lady, understanding who I was, received me with great satisfaction, and told me, she had long had a curiosity to be acquainted with a Mahometan: 'For you must know,' said she, 'that I have applied myself particularly to the study of *theology*, and by profound meditation and enquiry have formed a religion of my own, much better than *the vulgar one* in all respects. I never admit any-body to my

house, who is not distinguished from the *common herd of Christians* by some extraordinary notion in divinity: all these gentlemen are *eminently heretical*, each in a way peculiar to himself; they are so good to do me the honour of instructing me in their several points of faith, and submit their opinions to my judgment. Thus, Sir, I have composed a private system, which must necessarily be perfecter than any, because it is collected out of all; but to compleat it, I want a little of the *Korân*, a book which I have heard spoken of mighty handsomely by many learned men of my acquaintance: and I assure you, Sir, I should have a very good opinion of Mahomet himself, if he were not a little too hard upon the ladies. Be so kind therefore to *initiate* me in *your mysteries*, and you shall find me very *docile* and very *grateful*.'

'Madam,' replied I in great confusion, 'I did not come to England as a *missionary*, and was never versed in *religious disputation*. But if a *Persian tale* would entertain you, I could tell you one that the eastern ladies are mighty fond of.'

'A *Persian tale*!' cried she; 'have you the insolence to offer me a *Persian tale*? Really, Sir, I am not used to be so affronted.'

At these words, she retired into her closet, with her whole train of *metaphysicians*; and left my friend and me to go away, as unworthy of any further communion with her.

LETTER LXVIII.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

WOULDST thou know, Mirza, the present state of Europe? I will give it thee in a very few words.

There is *one nation* in it, which thinks of nothing but how to *prey* upon the *others*, while the others are entirely taken up with *preying* upon *themselves*.

VOL. I.

There is *one nation* where particulars take a pride in the glory of their country; while in *the others* no glory is considered, but that of raising or improving a vast estate.

There is *one nation* which though able in negotiation, puts its principal confidence in the *sword*; while *the others* trust wholly to the *pen*,

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though much less capable of using it with advantage.

There is *one nation* which invariably pursues a *great plan of general dominion*, while *the others* are pursuing *little interests*, though a labyrinth of *changes and contradictions*.

What, Mirza, dost thou think will be the

consequence? Is it not probable that *this nation* will in the end be lord of all the rest? It certainly must. One thing only can hinder it, which is, that the fear of falling under that yoke, when the peril appears to be imminent, may raise a different spirit *in all those nations*, and work out their safety from their danger itself.

LETTER LXIX.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

I Was the other day in a coffee-house, where I found a man declaiming upon the present state of Persia, and so warm for the interests of Tamas Kouli Kan, our invincible general*, that, if it had not been for his language and dress, I should have taken him for a Persian.

'Sir,' said I, 'are you acquainted with Tamas Kouli Kan, that you concern yourself thus about him?'

'No,' said he, 'I was never out of England; but I love the Persians, for being enemies to the Turks.'

'What hurt have the Turks done you,' answered I, 'that you bear such enmity against them?'

'Sir,' replied he, 'I am afraid they should hurt the *emperor*, whose friend I have always declared myself.'

I enquired of a gentleman that sat by me, who this FRIEND OF THE EMPEROR might be;

and was told that he was a *dancing-master* in St. James's Street.

'For my part,' said a young gentleman finely dressed, that stood sipping a dish of tea by the fire-side, 'I do not care if Tamas Kouli Kan, and the great Turk, and all the Persians and emperors in Europe, were at the bottom of the sea, provided Farinelli be but safe.'

The indifference of this gentleman surprised me more than the importance of the other.

'If you are concerned for Farinelli,' said a third, (who they told me was a chemist) 'persuade him to take my *drop*: and that will secure him from the humidity of the English air, which may very much prejudice his voice.'

'Will it not also make a *man* of him again?' said a gentleman to the doctor. 'After the miracles we have been told it has performed, there is nothing more wanting but *such a cure* to compleat its reputation.'

LETTER LXX.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

A Friend of mine was talking to me, some days ago, of the spirit of enthusiasm, which appeared so strongly in the first professors of our religion; and, as he pretended, in the prophet himself: to that chiefly he ascribed their mighty conquests; and observed, that there needed nothing more to render them invincible, such a spirit being constantly attended with a contempt of pleasure and of ease, of danger and of pain.

* By these words it appears, that these Letters were written before Tamas Kouli Kan usurped the throne.

'If,' said he, 'the enthusiasts of this country, in the reign of Charles the First, had been united among themselves, like the Arabians under Mahomet and his successors, I make no doubt but they might have conquered all Europe: but unhappily their enthusiasm was directed to different points; some were bigots to the Church of England; some to Calvin; some to particular whimsies of their own; one sett of them ran mad for a repub-

‘lick, others were no less out of their wits in the love of monarchy; so that, instead of making themselves formidable to their neighbours, they turned the edge of their fury against each other, and destroyed all peace and order here at home. Yet, as much as our ancestors suffered then by the wrong direction of their zeal, I wish the present age may not suffer more by the *total want* of it among us. There is so cold and lifeless an unconcern to every thing but a narrow, private interest; we are so little in earnest about

‘religion, virtue, honour, or the good of our country; that, unless some spark of the ancient fire should revive, I am afraid we shall jest away our liberties, and all that is serious to our happiness. If the great Mr. Hampden had conversed with our modern race of wits, he would have been told, that it was a *ridiculous enthusiasm*, to trouble himself about a trifling sum of money, because it was raised against the privileges of the people; and that he might *get* a thousand times more than he disputed for, by a *prudent submission*.’

LETTER LXXI.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

THERE is a new science produced in Europe of late years, entirely unknown to any former ages, or to any other part of the world, which is called TREATY LEARNING. I have been let into a general idea of it by a very ingenious friend of mine, who has acquired a considerable talent in it, having served an apprenticeship of twenty years under different masters in foreign courts, and made, in a political sense, *the tour of Europe*. He tells me, it is a very extensive study; for not only the rights of every prince, but *their inclinations to the rights of any other*, are therein set forth and comprehended. This has branched itself out into an infinity of *separate and secret articles, engagements, counter-engagements, memorials, remonstrances, declarations*; all the learned in this science are required to know perfectly by heart, that they may be ready upon occasion to apply them, or elude their application, as the interest of their masters shall demand.

He shewed me ten or twelve volumes lately published, consisting only of the treaties which have been made since the beginning of this century, four or five of which were quite filled with those of England.

‘Sure,’ said I, ‘this huge heap of negotiations could never have been employed about the business of this little spot of earth for so small a space of time as *thirty years*! No—the affairs of all Europe must be settled in them, *for the next century at least*.—For the

‘*next session of parliament*,’ answered he; ‘*these political machines* are seldom mounted to go longer than *that period*, without being taken to pieces, or new wound-up.’

‘But how,’ said I, could England, which is an island, be enough concerned in what passes on the continent, to undergo all this labour in adjusting it?’

‘O,’ replied he, ‘we grow weary of being confined *within the narrow verge of our own interests*; we thought it looked more *considerable, to expatiate*, and give our talents room to play. But this was not the only end of our continual and restless agitation: it may frequently be the interest of a minister, if he finds things in a calm, to *trouble the waters*, and work up a storm about him; if not to perplex and confound those *above him*, yet to embarrass and intimidate the competitors or rivals of his power.

‘Perhaps too there might be a still deeper motive: these engagements are for the most part pretty chargeable; and those who are obliged to make them good, complain that they are much *the poorer for them*; but it is not sure, that *those who form them* are so too.’

‘As far,’ said I, ‘as my little observation can enable me to judge of these affairs, the multiplicity of your treaties is as hurtful as the multiplicity of your laws. In Asia, a few plain words are found sufficient to

‘ settle the differences of particulars in a state,
 ‘ or of one state with another. But here you
 ‘ run into volumes upon both: and what is
 ‘ the effect of it? Why, after great trouble
 ‘ and great expence, you are as far from decision
 ‘ as before; nay, often more puzzled and con-
 ‘ founded. The only distinction seems to be,
 ‘ that in your law-suits, perplexing as they

‘ are, there is at last a rule of equity to resort
 ‘ to; but in the other disputes, the last appeal
 ‘ is to the iniquitous rule of force; and princes
 ‘ treat by the mouths of their great guns,
 ‘ which soon demolish all the paper on both
 ‘ sides, and tear to pieces every cobweb of nego-
 ‘ ciation.’

LETTER LXXII.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

I Was lately at a tavern with a sett of com-
 pany very oddly put together: there was
 a country gentleman, a man of honest princi-
 ples, but extremely a bigot to his religion,
 which was that of the Church of Rome; there
 was a lawyer, who was a very good Protestant,
 moderate to those who differed from him in
 points of belief, but zealous in the cause of
 civil liberty; there was a courtier, who seemed
 not to believe any thing, and to be angry with
 every body that did.

This last very rudely attacked the faith of
 the poor country gentleman, and laid open to
 him the frauds of the Roman priesthood, who,
 by slow but regular degrees, had erected such a
 tyranny over the minds and spirits of the people,
 that nothing was too gross for them to impose,
 or too arrogant to assume. He set forth the
 vast difference between a *bishop* in the primitive
 ages of Christianity, and a *pope*, with a triple
 crown upon his head, and half the wealth of
 Christendom in his treasury. He lamented the
 simplicity of those who, without looking back
 to the *original* of things, imagine that all is
right which they find *established*; and mistake
 the *corruptions of a system* for the *system itself*:
 he inveighed against the pusillanimity of others,
 who though they *see* the corruptions, and *detest*
 them, yet suffer them to continue *unreformed*,
 only because they *have been tolerated so long*;
 as if any *evil* was *less dangerous*, by being
 grown *habitual*.

He concluded by declaiming very eloquently
 on the use and advantage of *free-thinking*, that
 is, of doubting and examining every article
 proposed to our belief, which alone could de-
 tect these impositions, and confound the ill pur-

poses of their authors; mixing, in the course
 of his talk, with these just reflections, many
 licentious *witticisms* against what *all religion*
 and *all philosophy* have ever accounted sacred
 and venerable.

His antagonist had little to reply; but en-
 trenching himself in the necessity of *submitting*
 to the *authority* of the *church*, and the danger of
 allowing private *judgment* to call in question *her*
 decisions.

The dispute would have been turned into
 a quarrel, by the zeal of *one* and the asperity of
 the *other*, had not the lawyer very seasonably
 interposed, who, addressing himself to the ad-
 vocate for freedom, desired to know whether *li-*
*ber*ty in *temporals* was not of importance to
 mankind, as well as *liberty* in *spirituals*. ‘ How
 ‘ then comes it, that you, who are so warm for
 ‘ the maintenance of *the last*, are so notorious-
 ‘ ly indifferent to the first? To what shall we
 ‘ ascribe the mighty difference between your PO-
 ‘ LITICAL and RELIGIOUS FAITH? and whence
 ‘ is it that the former is so *easy*, and the latter
 ‘ so *intractable*? Can *those* who are thus quick-
 ‘ sighted in the frauds of *ecclesiastical dominion*,
 ‘ see no juggling at all in their *civil rulers*?
 ‘ Are the *impositions* less glaring, or more toler-
 ‘ able, which *they* both acquiesce in and sup-
 ‘ port, than those which they so violently
 ‘ oppose? Let us take the very instance
 ‘ you have given. Is a *pope* more *unlike*
 ‘ to a *christian bishop*, than a *sole minister* to
 ‘ an *officer of a free state*? If you look back
 ‘ to the *original* of things, what traces will
 ‘ you find of *such an office*? In what ancient
 ‘ constitution can you discover the founda-
 ‘ tions of *such a power*? Is not this a most

‘ manifest corruption, growing out of ten
 ‘ thousand corruptions, and naturally produc-
 ‘ tive of ten thousand more? If you say, these
 ‘ are *mysteries of state*, and therefore *not to be*
 ‘ *examined*; I am sure the *mysteries* you attack
 ‘ have yet a better title to your respect, and
 ‘ less mischief will attend on their remaining
 ‘ not subject to *enquiry*.

‘ Or will you borrow the arguments of
 ‘ your adversary, and plead the *necessity of sub-*
 ‘ *mission*, and the *danger* of setting up *reason*
 ‘ against *authority*? If so, I would only put
 ‘ you in mind, that *all authority flows from*
 ‘ *reason*, and ought to lose its force in propor-
 ‘ tion as it deviates from its source.

‘ It is a jest to say, that mankind cannot
 ‘ be governed without *these impositions*; they
 ‘ were governed happily before *these* were in-
 ‘ *vented*, much more happily than they have
 ‘ been ever since: as well it may be said, that
 ‘ Christian piety, which was established in
 ‘ plain-dealing and simplicity, must be sup-
 ‘ ported by the knavery and pageantry intro-
 ‘ duced in late ages by the Church of Rome.
 ‘ But the truth is, that most men do in the
 ‘ state just what you say have been done in
 ‘ the Church; they *maintain abuses by prescrip-*
 ‘ *tion*, and make the *bad* condition things *are*
 ‘ *in* an argument for letting them *grow worse*.’

‘ I cannot,’ said I, ‘ debate with the gen-
 ‘ tleman who has attacked the abuses of eccle-
 ‘ siastic power upon the particular facts he

‘ has asserted; nor will I wholly deny the
 ‘ conclusion he draws from those facts. But
 ‘ it seems to me, that he has often confounded
 ‘ two things entirely different; a just regard
 ‘ to religion, without which no society can
 ‘ long subsist, and a weak attachment to what
 ‘ either folly or knavery may have grafted up-
 ‘ on religion, and sanctified under that name.
 ‘ To distinguish these, is the part of a man
 ‘ of sense, and a good man; but to attack
 ‘ both without any distinction, to attack the
 ‘ first because of the last, is at least as far
 ‘ from true wisdom as superstition itself. Can
 ‘ a worse corruption, or a more dreadful dis-
 ‘ order, arise in any government, than an open
 ‘ contempt of religion, avowed and professed?
 ‘ A nation where *that* prevails, is on the brink
 ‘ of destruction. What degree of respect or
 ‘ submission is due to particular religious opi-
 ‘ nions, even to those which are not *essential*,
 ‘ I will not take upon me now to dispute; but
 ‘ this I am sure of, that a *blind confidence* in
 ‘ *temporal* affairs agrees very ill with *doubt*
 ‘ in *spirituals*. A free enquirer into points
 ‘ of speculation should, beyond all others, be
 ‘ ashamed of a tame compliance in points of
 ‘ action.

‘ The *unthinking* may be passive from de-
 ‘ lusion, or, at least, from inadvertency; but
 ‘ the *greatest monster* and *worst criminal* in
 ‘ society is a FREE-THINKING SLAVE.’

LETTER LXXIII.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

EVERY nation has some peculiar excel-
 lence, by which it is distinguished from
 its neighbours, and of which without vanity
 it may boast. Thus Italy produces the finest
fingers; England the stoutest *boxers*; Germany
 the profoundest *theologians*; and France is in-
 comparable for its *cooks*. This last advant-
 age carries the palm from ~~all~~ the rest; and
 that nation has great reason to be proud of
 it, as a talent of ‘universal currency, and
 for which all other countries do them homage:
 on this single perfection depends the pleasure,
 the magnificence, the pride, nay the reputa-

tion, of every court in Europe; without a
 good French *cook*, there is no ambassador can
 possibly do his master’s business, no secretary
 of state can hold his office, no man of quality
 can support his rank and dignity. A friend of
 mine, who frequently has the honour to dine
 at the tables of *the great*, for which he pays no
 higher price than *his vote in parliament*, has
 sometimes obliged me with a bill of fare, and
 (as near as he could) an estimate of the charge
 which these genteel entertainments are attended
 with. I told him, that their dinners put me in
 mind of what I had heard about their politicks:

they are *artificial, unsubstantial, and unwholesome*, but at the same time most *ruinously expensive*. 'Sure,' said I, your *great men* must have *digestions* prodigiously sharp and strong, to carry off such a load of various meats as are served up to them every day! they must not only be made with *heads and hearts*, but with *stomachs*, very *different* from other people!

'Not in the least,' answered he. 'They seldom touch any of the dainties that are before them: those dainties, like the women in your seraglios, are more intended for *ornament* than *use*. There is always a plain dish set in a corner, a homely joint of English beef or mutton, on which the master of the feast makes his dinner, and two or three choice friends, who are allowed to have a cut with him out of special grace and favour; while the rest are languishing in vain for such a happiness, and piddling upon ortolans and truffles.'

'I have seen a poor country gentleman sit down to one of these fine dinners with an extreme dislike to the French cookery; yet, for fear of being counted unpolite, not daring to refuse any thing that was offered him, but cramming and sweating with the struggle between his aversion and civility.'

'Why then,' said I, 'this continual extravagance? Why this number of victims daily sacrificed to the dæmon of luxury? How is it worth a man's while to undo himself, perhaps to undo his country, that his board may be graced with *patés* of perigord, when his guests had rather have the fowl from his barn-door? Your comparison of the seraglio will not hold; for though indeed there is an unnecessary variety, yet they are not *all* served up to *us together*; we content ourselves with *one* or *two* of them at a meal, and reserve the rest for future entertainments.'

I concluded, with repeating to him a story which is taken out of the annals of our kings.

'Schah Abbas, at the beginning of his reign, was more luxurious than became so great a prince. One might have judged of the vastness of his empire by the variety of dishes at his table: some were sent him from the Euphrates and Persian Gulph,

others from the Oxus and Caspian Sea. One day, when he gave a dinner to his nobles, Mahomet Ali, keeper of the Three Tombs, was placed next to the best dish of all the feast, out of respect for the sanctity of his office: but instead of falling-to, and eating heartily, as *holy men* are wont to do, he fetched a dismal groan, and fell a weeping. Schah Abbas, surprized at his behaviour, desired him to explain it to the company: he would fain have been excused; but the sophi ordered him, on pain of his displeasure, to acquaint them with the cause of his disorder.

"Know, then," said he, "O monarch of the earth! that when I saw thy table covered in this manner, it brought to my mind a dream, or rather vision, which was sent me from the prophet whom I serve. On the seventh night of the moon Rhamazan, I was sleeping under the shade of the sacred tombs, when, methought, the holy ravens of the sanctuary bore me up on their wings into the air, and in a few moments conveyed me to the lowest heaven, where the messenger of God, on whom be peace! was sitting in his luminous tribunal, to receive petitions from the earth. Around him stood an infinite throng of animals, of every species and quality, which all joined in preferring a complaint against thee, Schah Abbas, for destroying them wantonly and tyrannically, beyond what any necessity could justify, or any natural appetite demand."

"It was alledged by them, that ten or twelve of them were often murdered, to compose one dish for the niceness of thy palate; some gave their tongues only, some their bowels, some their fat, and others their brains or blood. In short, they declared, such constant waste was made of them, that unless a stop was put to it in time, they should perish entirely by thy gluttony. The prophet, hearing this, bent his brows, and ordered six vultures to fetch thee alive before him: they instantly brought thee to his tribunal, where he commanded thy stomach to be opened, and examined whether it was bigger or more capacious than those of other men;

"when it was found to be just of the common size, he permitted all the animals to make reprisals on the body of their destroyer; but, before one in ten thousand could get at thee, every particle of it was devoured; so ill proportioned was the of-

fender to the offence."

'This story made such an impression on Sophi, that he would not suffer above one dish of meat to be brought to his table ever after.'

LETTER LXXIV.

TO ABRAHAM MOLLAC, AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

YES, holy Mollac, I am more and more convinced of it; infidelity is certainly attended with a spirit of infatuation. The prophet hurts the understanding of those who refuse to receive his holy law; he punishes the hardness of their hearts, by the depravation of their judgments. How can we otherwise account for what I have seen since my arrival among Christians?

I have seen a people, whose very being depends on commerce, suffer *luxury* and the *heavy load of taxes* to ruin their manufactures at home, and turn the balance against them in foreign trade!

I have seen them glory in the greatness of their wealth, when they are reduced every year to carry on the expences of government by robbing the very *fund* which is to ease them of a debt of *fifty millions*!

I have seen them *fit out fleets*, *augment their forces*, express continual *fears* of an *invasion*, and suffer continual depredations upon their merchants from a contemptible enemy; yet all the while hug themselves in the notion of being blest with a *profound and lasting peace*!

I have seen them wrapped up in full secu-

rity, upon the flourishing state of *publick credit*, only because they had a *prodigious stock of paper*, which now, indeed, they circulate as money; but which the first alarm of a calamity may, in an instant, make *mere paper* of again!

I have seen them constantly busied in *passing laws* for the better regulation of their *police*, and never taking any care of their *execution*; loudly declaring the abuses of their government, and quietly allowing them to encrease!

I have seen them distressed for *want of hands* to carry on their husbandry and manufactures; yet permitting thousands of their people to be destroyed or rendered useless and hurtful to society, by the abominable use of *spirituous liquors*!

I have seen them make such a *provision* for their *poor*, as would relieve all their wants if well applied; and suffer a third part of them to *starve*, from the roguery and riot of those entrusted with the care of them!

But the *greatest* of all the *wonders* I have seen, and which most of all proves their *infatuation*, is, that they *profess* TO MAINTAIN LIBERTY BY CORRUPTION.

LETTER LXXV.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

I Felicitate thee, Mirza, on thy new dignity; I bow myself reverently before thee, not with the heart of a flatterer, but a friend; the favour of thy master shines upon thee; he has raised thee to the right-hand of his throne; the treasures of Persia are committed to thy custody: if thou behavest thyself honest-

ly and wisely, I shall think thee much *greater* from thy *advancement*; if otherwise, much *lower* than before. Thou hast undertaken a charge very important to thy prince and to his people; both are equally concerned in thy administration, both have equally a right to thy fidelity. If ever thou shalt separate

their interests, if thou shalt set up the one against the other, know, it will end in the ruin of *both*. Do not imagine that thy master will be richer by draining his subjects of their wealth: such *gains* are *irreparable losses*; they may serve a present sordid purpose, but dry up the sources of opulence for futurity.

I would recommend to thy attention and remembrance, the saying of a famous English *treasurer* in the happy reign of Queen Elizabeth. 'I do not love,' said that truly able minister, 'to see the treasury swell like a distempered spleen, when the other parts of the state are in a consumption.' Be it thy care to prevent such a decay; and, to that end, not only save the publick all unnecessary expence, but so *digest* and *order* what is needful, that *perplexity* may not serve to cover *fraud*, nor *incapacity* lurk behind *confusion*. Rather submit to any difficulty and distress in the conduct of thy ministry than *anticipate* the revenues of the government without an absolute necessity: for such expedients are a *temporary ease*, but a *permanent destruction*.

In relieving the people from their taxes,

let it also be thy glory to relieve them from the infinite number of *tax-gatherers*, which, far worse than the Turkish or Russian armies, have *harrassed* and *plundered* our poor country.

As thou art the distributor of the bounties of the crown, make them the reward of service and merit; not the hire of parasites and flatterers to thy master or *thyself*. But, above all, as thou art now a *publick person*, elevate thy mind beyond any *private view*; try to enrich the publick before thyself; and think less of establishing thy family at the head of thy country, than of setting thy country at the head of Asia.

If thou canst steadily persevere in such a conduct, thy prince will want *thee* more than thou dost *him*: if thou buildest thy fortune on *any other basis*, how high soever it may rise, it will be tottering from the *weakness of its foundation*.

He alone is a *minister of state*, whose services are *necessary to the publick*; the rest are the creatures of *caprice*, and feel their *slavery* even in their power.

LETTER LXXVI.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

THE virtuous Abdallah is returned to England, after having been absent fourteen moons. I yesterday restored to him his lovely Zelis, the *wife* whom he had given me at his departure, and whom I treated like a *sister*. Nothing ever was so moving as the scene, when I joined their hands again after a separation which they had feared would prove eternal*. The possession of the finest woman in the world could not give me so much pleasure as this act of humanity and justice: I made two people happy, who deserved it; and am secured of the affections of both to the last moment of their lives.

When the transports of their joy were a little over, Abdallah gave me the following relation of all that had happened to him since he left us.

THE HISTORY OF ABDALLAH.

YOU know that I sailed from England with an intent to redeem my father from captivity. As soon as I came to Malta, I went and threw myself at the feet of the grand master, beseeching him to take the ransom I had brought, and set my father free.

He answered me, that the person for whom I sued was no longer in a condition to be ransomed, being condemned to die the next day. I was ready to die myself at this account; and, desiring to know his offence, was informed, that, being unable to redeem himself, he was put to the oar like a common slave, without any regard to his innocence or age: that during an engagement with a Turk-

* See Page 45.

ish ship, he had persuaded the other slaves to quit their oars, and fight against the Christians; but that, being overpowered, he was brought to Malta, and condemned to be broke upon the wheel, as an example to the other captives in the gallies: that this dreadful sentence was to be executed upon him the morning after my arrival, and no ransom could be accepted for his life.

‘O Heaven!’ said I, ‘did I come so far to no other purpose, but to be witness of the death of my wretched father, and a death so full of horror! Would the waves of the sea had swallowed me up, before I reached this fatal and accursed shore!—O Abderamen! O my father! what avails to thee the pity of thy son? How shall I bear to take my leave of thee for ever, at our first meeting, after an absence which seemed so long? Can I stand by, and give thee up to torments, when I flattered myself that I arrived to bring thee liberty? Alas! my presence will only aggravate thy sufferings, and make the bitterness of death more insupportable!’

In this extremity, I offered the grand master, not only to pay down all the ransom I had promised before, but to yield myself a voluntary slave, and serve in the gallies all my life, if Abderamen’s might be spared.

He seemed touched with my proposal, and inclined to pity me; but was told by a Jesuit, who was his confessor, that an example of severity was necessary; and that he ought to pardon my father on no other terms but renouncing Mahometism, and being converted immediately to the *Church of Rome*.

‘No,’ cried I, if *that* is to be the price of a few unhappy years, it is better both of us should perish than accept them. But can you,’ said I to the priest, ‘who profess an holiness superior to other men, can you obstruct the mercy of your prince, and compel him to destroy a wretched man, whose only crime was the natural love of liberty? Is this your way of making converts to your faith, by the terror of racks and wheels, instead of reason?’

My reproaches signified nothing but to incense him, and I quitted the palace in despair. I was going to the prison, to see my father, for the first and last time, when a Turkish slave ac-

costed me, and bade me follow him. I refused to do it; but he assured me it was of moment to the life of Abderamen. I followed him, and he led me by a back way to a woman’s apartment in the palace. I continued there till past midnight without seeing any body, in agitations not to be conceived: at last there came to me a lady richly dressed in the habit of my own country. After looking at me attentively some time—‘O Abdallah!’ said she, ‘have you forgot Zoraide the sister of Zelis?’

These words soon brought her to my remembrance, though I had not seen her for many years: I embraced her tenderly, and desired to hear what fortune had carried her to Malta.

‘You know,’ said she, ‘that my family is of the island of Cyprus, and that I was married young to a rich merchant of Aleppo. I had by him two children, a son and daughter; and lived very happily some years, till my husband’s business carrying him to Cyprus, I persuaded him to let me go, and make a visit to my relations in that island. In our passage a violent storm arose, which drove us westward beyond the isle of Candia; and before we could put into any harbour, a Maltese pirate attacked us, killed my husband, and carried me to Malta. My beauty touched the heart of the grand master; which is the more surprising, as I took no pains to set it off, thinking of nothing but the loss I had sustained: he bought me of the knight whose prize I was; and I thought it some comfort in my captivity, that I was delivered from the hands that had been stained in my husband’s blood. The passion of my new lord was so excessive, that he used me more like a princess than a slave. He could deny me nothing I asked him, and was so liberal, that he never approached me without a present. You see the pomp and magnificence in which I live: my wealth is great, and my power in this place superior to any-body’s. Hear then, Abdallah, what my friendship has done for you, and remember the obligation you have to me. I have employed all my interest with my lover to save the life of Abderamen: he has consented to it; and, moreover, to set him free upon the payment of the ransom you proposed. But, in recompence for the aid which I have given you, you must promise to

‘assist me in an affair that will probably be attended with some danger.’ I assured her, there was nothing I would not risque, to do the sister of Zelis any service.

‘You shall know,’ said she, ‘what it is I require of you, when the time comes to put it in execution; till then, remain at Malta, and wait my orders.’

At these words, she delivered to me a pardon under the seal of the grand master, and bid me carry it instantly to my father. I was so transported that I could not stay to thank her: I ran, I flew, to the prison of Abderamen; and, shewing the order I brought with me to his guards, was admitted to the dungeon where he lay.

The poor old man, expecting nothing but death, and believing I was the officer that came to carry him to the place of execution, fainted away before I had time to discover to him either my person or my errand. While he lay in that state of insensibility, I unbound his chains, and bore him into the open air, where with a good deal of difficulty he recovered. ‘O my father!’ said I to him, when I perceived that his senses were returned, ‘do you not know your son Abdallah, who is come hither to save your life, who has obtained your pardon, and redeemed you from captivity?’ The surprize of joy that seized him in that instant, at my sight and words, was too sudden and violent for his age and weakness to support. He struggled some time to make an answer; but at last, straining me in his arms, and muttering some half-formed sounds, he sunk down, and expired on my bosom.

When I saw that he was dead, I lost all patience; and, covering myself with dust, bewailed my folly, in not telling him my good tidings by degrees.

By this time it was broad day; and the whole town, being informed of my affliction, was gathered about me in great crowds. The grand master himself, taking pity of me, sent to tell me, that he would permit me to bear away my father’s body to Aleppo, and excuse me the ransom I had offered, since death had delivered him without it. This indulgence comforted me a little; and I would have embarked immediately for the Levant, if I had not been stopped by my promise to Zoraide. Several days passed

without my hearing any news of her. I had already hired a small vessel, and put on board the remains of Abderamen; when, late one night, I was waked out of my sleep by Zoraide in the habit of a man, who told me, that she was come to claim my promise. I asked what she required me to do. ‘To carry me to Aleppo,’ answered she, ‘that I may see my dear children once again, and enrich them with the treasures which I have gained from the bounty of my lover. Those treasures are useless to me without them; in the midst of all my pomp and outward pleasures, I am perpetually pining for their loss; *the mother’s heart* is unsatisfied within; nor will it let me enjoy a moment’s peace, till I am restored to them in my happy native land.’ As she said this, she shewed me some bags of gold, and a casket filled with jewels of great value. ‘I must insist, Abdallah,’ continued she, ‘that you set sail this very night, and take me along with you. The weather is tempestuous, but that circumstance will favour my escape; and I had rather venture to perish in the sea, than live any longer from my family.’

The sense of the obligation I had to her made me consent to do what she desired, how perilous soever it appeared to me. As I had a permission from the grand master to go away as soon as I thought fit, I put to sea that night without any hindrance; and the wind blowing hard off the shore, in a little while we were out of sight of Malta. The water was so rough for two or three days, that we thought it impossible our barque could weather it out; but at length, the storm abating, we pursued our voyage with a very fair wind, and arrived safe in the port of Scanderoon. Zoraide was transported with the thought of being so near Aleppo and her children; she embraced me in the most affectionate manner, and expressed a gratitude for the service I had done her far beyond what it deserved. But how great was her disappointment and affliction, when we were told by the people of Scanderoon, that the plague was at Aleppo, and had destroyed a third part of the inhabitants!

‘Ah, wretched Zoraide!’ cried she, weeping, ‘where are now all thy hopes of being blest in the sight of thy two children? Perhaps those two children are no more; or, if

‘ they still live, it is in hourly expectation of
 ‘ dying with the rest of their fellow-citizens.
 ‘ Perhaps at this moment they begin to sicken,
 ‘ and want the care of their mother to tend up-
 ‘ on them, when they are abandoned by every
 ‘ other friend.’

Thus did she torture herself with dreadful apprehensions; and, often turning her eyes towards Aleppo, gave herself up to all the agonies of grief.

I said every thing I could think of to relieve her, but she would not be comforted.

The next morning the servants I had put about her came and told me that she was not to be found: they also brought me a letter, which informed me, that, not being able to endure the uncertainty she was in about her children, she had stolen away by night, and gone to Aleppo to share their danger with them; that, if she and her family escaped the sickness, I should hear from her again; but that, if they died, she was resolved not to survive them. She added, that she had left me a box of diamonds worth two thousand pistoles, being a fourth part of the jewels which she had brought from Malta by my assistance.

You may imagine how deeply I was affected at reading this letter. I resolved to stay at Scanderoon till I had some news of her, notwithstanding my passionate desire to return to Zelis. I had waited five weeks with great impatience, when we received accounts that the infection was ceased, and the commerce with Aleppo restored again. I immediately went to visit my native town; but, alas! I had little pleasure in the sight of it, after so dismal calamity. My first enquiry was about Zoraide and her children. They carried me to her house, where I found her son, a youth of sixteen. When I made myself known to him, he fell a weeping, and told me his mother and sister were both dead. I very sincerely joined with him in his grief, and offered to restore to him the jewels she had given me. ‘ No, Abdallah,’ said he, ‘ I am rich enough in what I inherit

‘ from my father and Zoraide. But these riches
 ‘ cannot comfort me for her death, nor any
 ‘ time wear out of my remembrance the uncom-
 ‘ mon affection which occasioned it. O, Ab-
 ‘ dallah! what a mother have I lost, and what
 ‘ a friend are you deprived of! When she came
 ‘ hither,’ continued he, ‘ from Scanderoon,
 ‘ my sister and I believed we had seen a spirit:
 ‘ but when we found it was really Zoraide, our
 ‘ hearts melted with tenderness and joy. That
 ‘ joy was soon over; for, the third day after
 ‘ her arrival at Aleppo, I found myself seized
 ‘ with the distemper. She never quitted my
 ‘ bedside during my illness; and to the care she
 ‘ took of me I owed my life: but it proved fa-
 ‘ tal to *her* and my poor sister, who both caught
 ‘ the infection by nursing me; and, having
 ‘ weaker constitutions, were not able to strug-
 ‘ gle with it so well. My sister died first, and
 ‘ Zoraide quickly followed: when she perceiv-
 ‘ ed herself just expiring, she called me to her,
 ‘ and bade me endeavour to find you out at
 ‘ Scanderoon, and let you know, that she be-
 ‘ queathed to you the portion she had intended
 ‘ for my sister, amounting to five thousand
 ‘ pieces of gold, as to the man in the world she
 ‘ most esteemed: she added, that to you she re-
 ‘ commended me with her latest breath, im-
 ‘ ploring you to take care of me for her sake,
 ‘ and the sake of her sister Zelis.’

The poor boy was not able to go on with his story any further. I accepted the legacy, and did my utmost to discharge worthily the trust conferred upon me: but my first care was, to bury Abderamen with all the pomp that our customs will admit. After some time spent in settling the affairs of my pupil, and my own, I took a passage on board an English ship, and arrived happily in London.

I am now possessed of a fortune that is sufficient to maintain Zelis in the manner I desire; and have nothing more to ask of Heaven but an opportunity of repaying you, O Selim, the friendship and goodness you have shewn me.

LETTER LXXVII.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

I Am going, in the confidence of friendship, to give thee a proof of the weakness of human nature, and the unaccountable capriciousness of our passions. Since I delivered up Zelis to her husband, I have not enjoyed a moment's peace. Her beauty, which I saw without emotion while she continued *in my power*, now she is *out of it*, has fired me to that degree that I have almost lost my reason. I cannot bear to see her in the possession of the man to whom I gave her: if shame, if despair, did not hinder it, I should ask him for her again. In this uneasiness and disorder of my mind, there remains but one part for me to take: I must fly from her charms and my own weakness; I must retire into Persia, and endeavour, by absence and different objects, to efface the impression she has made. Alas! what shall I find there? a seraglio composed of beautiful *slaves*; the *mercenary prostitutes*, or *reluctant victims*, to gross and tyrannical lust! What *rational commerce* can I hope for with *these*, what *true affection*, what *solid peace*, what *heart-felt delight*? But, were Zelis my wife, *in such a wife* I should find the most *endeared*, most *pleasing*, most *faithful friend*. All the precautions of eastern jealousy would then be unnecessary; those wretched precautions, which, while they bar the door against dishonour, shut out esteem, the life of friendship, and confidence, the soul of love.

Thou wilt be surprized at my talking thus:

but what I feel for Zelis, and what I have seen in England, has overcome my native prejudices: I have seen here wives, over whose conduct, though perfectly free, *religion, honour, and love*, are stricter guards than legions of eunuchs, or walls of brass: I have seen, by consequence, *much happier husbands* than any Persian can possibly be. We will discourse on this subject more fully when I am with thee: and it will be my greatest pleasure, to try to remove out of thy mind all those prepossessions of which my own has been cured by my abode in this country. If I bring thee home *truth*, I am sure thou wilt think that I have travelled to better purpose, than if I came back fraught with the gold of Peru, or the diamonds of Golconda.

I have more than completed the four years stay I proposed making in England; and am now determined to pass through France as far as Marseilles, and embark from thence for the Levant, as soon as the business with which I am charged on the part of some of my friends, with the Turkey merchants there, will permit. It is my fixed resolution to go away without giving Zelis the least intimation of the cause of my departure. Abdallah shall never know that I am his *rival*; it would take too much from the character of a *friend*. Thou art the only one to whom I dare confide my folly; and since it has hurt nobody but myself, I hope thou wilt rather pity than blame me for it.

LETTER LXXVIII.

SELIM, TO MIRZA AT ISPAHAN.

From London.

I Am just on the point of leaving England: Abdallah and Zelis have received my adieus. The combat is past; my resolutions strengthen, and thou mayest expect ere long to see thy friend, with a *mind* a good deal altered by his travels: but a *heart*, which to *thee*, to his *country*, and to his *duty*, is still *the same*.

It would be unjust and ungrateful in me to

quit *this island*, without expressing a very high esteem of the *good sense, sincerity, and good-nature*, I have found among *the English*: to these qualities I might also add *politeness*, which certainly they have as good a title to as *any of their neighbours*; but I am afraid that this accomplishment has been acquired too much at the expence of other virtues more solid and essential. Of

their *industry*, their commerce is a proof; and for their *valour*, let their *enemies* declare it. Of their *faults* I will at present say no more, but that many of them are *newly introduced*, and so contrary to the genius of the people, that one would hope they might be easily rooted out. They are undoubtedly, all circumstances considered, a very *great*, a very *powerful* and *happy* nation; but how long they shall *continue so*, depends entirely on the *preservation of their liberty*. To the *constitution* of their government alone are attached all these blessings and advantages: should *that* ever be *depraved* or *corrupted*, they must expect to become the most *contemptible* and most *unhappy* of mankind. For what can so much aggravate the wretchedness of an oppressed and ruined people, as the remembrance of for-

mer freedom and prosperity? All the image and traces of their liberty, which it is probable no change will quite destroy, must be a perpetual reproach and torment to them, for having so degenerately parted with *their birth-right*. And, if slavery is to be endured, where is the man that would not rather chuse it under the warm sun of Agra or Ispahan, than in the northern climate of England?

I have therefore taken my leave of my friends here, with this affectionate, well-meant advice, That they should vigilantly *watch over their constitution*, and guard it by those strong bulwarks which alone are able to secure it, *a firm union of all honest men, justice upon publick offenders, national and private frugality*.

F I N I S.

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LETTER

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